

GRAIL

■ THAT GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED IN ALL THINGS ■

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The GRAIL



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THIS MONTH Pope Plus XII will exercise one of his greatest powers as pontiff when he presides at the canonization of the virgin martyr, Maria Goretti, and declares infallibly that she is a saint and is now enjoying the beatific vision of God. At a time when loose standards of morality and sex license have made a shambles of the home and the family, the heroic fortitude of this modern teen-age martyr will be a silent reproach and a call to chastity. The Holy Father stressed her spirit of fortitude in his allocution at Maria's beatification in 1947. "How can he who has surrendered without a struggle imagine what strength it requires to dominate, without a moment of weakness, the secret stirrings and urgings of the senses and the heart which adolescence awakens in our fallen nature."

Saint Mary's victorious chastity was not a pale and anemic thing—nor was her heart a stranger to love; rather she burned so strongly with the love of God that there was no room in her heart for the counterfeit fires of lust.

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The twelve-year-old victim of a sex crime
is canonized this month—
the spirit of Agnes, virgin and martyr,
flings a challenge to modern girls and women.

Saint Mary Goretti

by Frances King

HAD NETTUNO been a small town in the United States instead of in the province of Rome, Italy, on July 2, 1902, the evening newspapers would have screamed a familiar bloody headline over this story:

"A twelve-year old victim of an attempted sex crime lay in Orsenigio Hospital this afternoon in a critical condition.

"The girl—Maria Goretti—was stabbed 14 times with a sharpened awl before others in the house heard her cries for help.

"Alessandro Serenelli, 17-year-old farm youth, has admitted to the police that he stabbed the girl after locking her in an upstairs room with himself in the farmhouse which their two families share.

"Mrs. Assunta Goretti, mother of the girl, told police that her daughter twice before had complained of Alessandro's suggestions and had expressed fear to be alone with him. She said, however, she had thought the girl was imagining things since the families had operated the farm together for years and the children always had lived together peaceably.

"It was Giovanni Serenelli, father of the boy, who first heard the cries of Maria. He and Mrs. Goretti were threshing beans in the yard. Young Serenelli had



The detailed story of Saint Mary Goretti is now available in a pamphlet entitled "Blood-Stained Lily" by Alfred MacConastair, C.P. A Grail Publication, 15¢.

been helping them until a short time before they heard Maria's cries for help. Mrs. Goretti said the youth had excused himself on some pretense and had left his work.

"The girl was still conscious when they reached her. She told them that young Serenelli had stabbed her.

"'When I asked her why,' Mrs. Goretti sobbed to police, 'she said Alessandro had wanted her to sin with him and that she would rather die than to do that....'"

When the child died at 3:34 p.m. the following day, begging God to forgive her murderer—and when police had to hold an angry crowd off Alessandro—the stories no doubt would have made front-page copy.

There would have been subsequent stories of Serenelli's trial and conviction to 30 years of labor in the Nato penitentiary in Sicily.

And then the world would have forgotten, perhaps little realizing that in this story—so much like daily front-page stories today—it had read the story of a saint, martyred for the cause of purity.

Whether it was merely pious mutterings or actual conviction, some of the old ladies who stood around the hospital after Maria died uttered a prophecy when they said: "He killed a saint."

And whether or not they lived

to see the "prophecy" fulfilled, Maria's 85-year-old mother, Assunta, has lived to see it—and so has the instrument of her martyrdom, Alessandro, who is now 65. Both of them were key witnesses in the second trial surrounding the death of Maria—the Church's trial of her cause for canonization which began in 1921 and which ends on June 25 with her solemn canonization at St. Peter's basilica in Rome. Pope Pius XII proclaimed her a martyr worthy of veneration, on the Feast of the Annunciation in 1945. Two years later on April 27, she was beatified Blessed Maria.

Although he no longer is in prison, Alessandro is not expected to attend the canonization, nor did he attend the beatification ceremony. He did, however, visit Mrs. Goretti in 1937 to ask her forgiveness for the crime he had committed 35 years before. Alessandro was released from prison in 1929, after serving 27 years, and is now employed at a Capuchin monastery at Ascoli.

But when the bells ring out to the world on June 25 the news that this simple little girl has won sainthood, 85-year-old Assunta will be there. Accompanying her probably will be Maria's two sisters who now are Franciscan Sisters of Mary in Rome and a brother, Mariano. Maria's brother, An-

gelo, lives in New Village, Phillipsburg, N.J., where her third brother, Alessandro, died in 1917.

The rest of the world listens to the simple story of Maria Goretti and wonders. It sounds so much like today's front-page stories—except that from it came a saint. What was there about her, which made her story different? What made her a saint—she who lived not quite 12 years?

It was not her mere protest to Alessandro: "No, no. It is a sin" That alone did not make her a saint, but it was her life that made her able to say those words even in the face of death.

It was from the lips of the one who knew her best—her mother—that the church and the world learned about Maria's simple life.

Although only 12, Mary was tall for her age and bore signs of approaching maturity. Her mother pictures her as an attractive, if not beautiful girl, with luxuriant golden-brown hair hanging to her waist. People found it easy to love Maria because she was frank and open by nature, yet modest in both speech and manner.

There were five other children in the family—Angelo, Mariano, Alessandro, Teresa and Ersilia—but the queen of the whole family was Maria.

Early in life Assunta Goretti was left a widow with these six

small children to care for. She had married Luigi Goretti, a peasant from LaMarche, when she was but 19 years old. Luigi had formed the partnership with the Serenellis and at his death had left his widow and children to carry on with it. Assunta was not happy with the partnership, but she had no other means of supporting her children.

Although illiterate, Assunta was a devout Catholic and attended week-day Masses often. She and Luigi had been content to be poor. Their object in life had been to rear a Catholic family, and now that Luigi was dead Assunta knew it was her job to protect their souls as well as their bodies. She could not send them to school because there was no school near by. But she could teach them to pray, to recite the Ten Commandments and to repeat the catechism lessons she remembered memorizing in her youth. Each night she gathered her brood around her and recited the Rosary with them.

The mother's emphasis on purity and goodness bore fruit in Maria who frequently expressed her preference for death rather than to deliberately sin. Even before she was called upon to make that supreme alternative, her life bore testimony to her sincerity. Before the sacred tribunal her mother asserted: "Never did I notice in

her a violation of the law of God."

Long before she was permitted, Maria desired to make her First Communion, but she could not read the catechism which was a necessary preparation for it. She approached her mother with the problem, and her mother reminded her that they were poor—that she could not read—and that she barely had a spare moment in her busy young life.

Maria admitted this was true. While her mother labored in the fields, Maria was referee for the squabbles of her little brothers and sisters, and was the only teacher they knew. Maria taught them their prayers and what catechism she had learned from her parents' lips. Rising early in the morning she would say her prayers, then awaken her brothers and sisters, help them to dress and to say their prayers. Because they were too poor to offer Masses, after the others had gone to bed Maria stayed up to pray for her dead father.

There were days too when she had to go to a nearby city and stand on a street-corner, selling eggs and pigeons. But Maria leaped over all of these barriers which her mother presented, and assured her that none of these duties would be neglected, and it would cost nothing. She said she knew a lady in a nearby town who

owned a catechism. The lady could read and Maria knew the lady would be willing to teach her what she needed to know.

Consent finally granted, Maria trudged back and forth several miles for months in preparation for her First Communion. When the big day finally arrived, Maria went to Father Jerome, a Passionist, to thank him for giving her "her Jesus." She confided in him that she had made three promises: never to commit a sin of impurity; devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows; three Hail Marys morning and night to obtain the grace never to defile her soul by sin.

That was the background of Maria. But what was the story behind Alessandro's tragedy—for the tragedy was his.

Mrs. Goretti told the sacred tribunal that Alessandro's mother had died while he was still a child, and he had been reared by a father of "morally doubtful" character. The father often brought Alessandro obscene illustrations and stories of sex and crime when he made a trip to Nettuno. Alessandro also admitted that he always had liked to read about murders, and that as he brooded over his past failures to sully Maria's purity, he conceived a murder of his own.

"I confess," he declared later from his prison cell, "that my only

aim was to sully her purity. I was determined that if I failed, as I had done the first and second times, I would kill her."

Alessandro had sharpened an awl and had it ready in case Maria refused him again when he approached her on July 5, 1902. And when she pushed him away, saying, "No! No! God does not want it. It is a sin...", Alessandro carried out his plan. He stabbed her eight times and left her lying on the floor, thinking that she was dead. But when she dragged herself to the door and cried out to his father for help, Alessandro heard and returned. He stabbed her six more times.

Her martyrdom did not come quickly. She endured a two-hour operation fully conscious. Throughout the remaining 20 hours of her life she was conscious and in pain without relief, and in thirst without being able to drink.

Outside the hospital a crowd had gathered because they knew Maria had made her last confession and was near death. They knew that she had forgiven Alessandro and had told her mother: "In heaven I shall pray for his conversion. I want him to be with me in Paradise like the penitent thief."

Men and women wept openly when told that Maria had died.

Large crowds from nearby towns attended her funeral at Nettuno two days later, and literally covered her coffin with flowers. She was buried in the local cemetery, but in 1928 her body was removed to the church of Our Lady of Grace in Nettuno. It now rests in the Church of Saints John and Paul in Rome.

Perhaps Maria's first miracle was the conversion of Alessandro which she had promised to pray for in heaven. Alessandro, who had contended at his trial that the girl had sinned with him, confessed one day that he had lied.

"I regret my evil deed because I am conscious of having taken the life of an innocent girl, who, to the very end, struggled for her honor, sacrificing herself rather than yield to my desires."

After Maria's cause for canonization was started, Alessandro volunteered to testify before the sacred tribunal because he said it was his duty. And since his release from prison he often has declared: "I have a powerful advocate in heaven."

What brought about the change in Alessandro? Here are his own words:

"One night in my cell I saw Maria standing in dazzling white, gathering beautiful lilies in a garden and handing them to me. As

I received each lily from her virginal hands, it was transformed into a small light that shone like a candle. Then she disappeared.

"They told me that on her death-bed she had pardoned me, that she asked our Lord to pardon me, that she wanted me to be with her in Paradise. I could hold out no longer. My hard heart was touched. I broke down and cried."

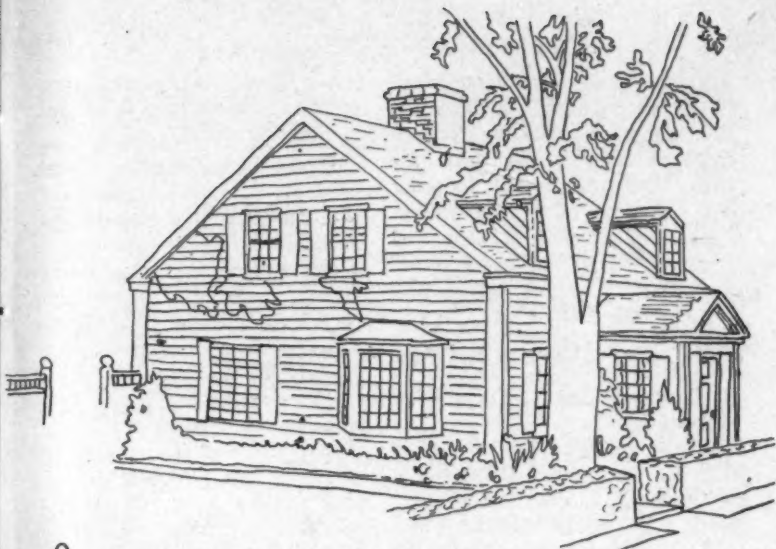
June 25 the joyous bells of Rome will ring out the news of a child's canonization, and Alessandro, her executioner, may kneel in the Capuchin Cloister and say: "Pray for me, Saint Mary Goretti"—while in a place of honor in St. Peter's basilica, an old woman may pray softly: "Dearest Lord, I was not worthy of being the mother of such an angel."



A Man's World

There is something there—between a man and a boy—a woman cannot share.
The way a rough, gentle hand smoothes a tousled head.
The way strong arms brace young shoulders.
The light burning in a man's eyes when a boy looks at him—worshipping
the great strength of him.
The smile of a man when he is sure of a boy's trust.
There is something in the world of a man and a boy a woman cannot touch
or have—ever.

EMILY HARKINS in the *Mount Mirror Magazine*



The little church that a home is

*by their very vocation to Christian Marriage
a husband and wife make their home a sacred place;
for the marriage contract has three partners,
husband, wife, and God*

by Walter Sullivan, O.S.B.

IT IS a fact that people usually become holy or worldly by living in a holy or worldly place; since it is not possible for the Christian family to remain night and day in the parish church, then the home itself where most of life is lived must become a sacred place... a little church where the members

not only feed the body, but where they also nourish the life of the soul.

This is the teaching of one of the greatest apostles of the Christian family, St. John Chrysostom, who once said: "After the public worship of God (in church) we

will spread two tables in our houses, one with the food of the body, and the other with the food of Holy Scripture; one with the fruits of the earth, and the other with the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Prayer and teaching in the church are not enough; they must be accompanied by prayer and reading at home: for the home is a family church."

• If this idea sounds fantastic to Christian ears today, it is only because the virus of secularism has deafened them to the advice of Holy Mother Church. If the words of the holy doctor sound far-fetched it is not because he is old-fashioned, but because twentieth-century Christians no longer think of religion except as a matter of church-going.

Of course, the Christian home is more than a little church where mother and father and children serve and worship God; it is a school of perfection, the best and most hallowed of all academies; it is a workshop, a love nest for husband and wife, a house of hospitality, a playhouse, a little theater, a music-lyceum, a quick-lunch counter for hungry kids and a university of hard knocks; above all, home is a place where the father's love and the mother's faith glow like a beacon in the midst of a dark night...or at least a place where love and faith shine

most of the time, even if storms of passion sometimes bring a momentary blackout.

If the name, "family church," used by St. John Chrysostom for the home, seems a pietistic exaggeration to the reader, it is because moderns are forgetting the deepest meaning of marriage and the family: to add to the population of heaven by bringing up new children of the saints. The highest purpose of the family is not material security, helpful as it is; rather the God-intended purpose of family life is to help the members become holy. Married folk and their offspring are not to be half-Christians simply because they live in the world and in a state of life surrounded by carnal consolation and tenderness. Married folks and their children are called to the same holiness as the barefooted Carmelites who spend their hours in contemplation and work, or the cowed monks treading the silences of their cloisters. The home must be for the family an instrument of holiness, a domestic temple of God.

A home is as much a school of perfection as a monastery, and as much a place of prayer as an oratory, for the little ones are to be brought up in the family as children of the saints. This task is doubly hard when the parents themselves are not strong in the

faith, and ill-prepared to be father and mother of devout children. It is doubly hard also when there is no environment or atmosphere of the faith inside the walls of the home to reinforce the parental care.

This atmosphere of faith in which mother and father and children develop spiritually does not mean that the home has to be a religious picture gallery, or a monastery with a round of pious exercises all day long. This atmosphere of faith doesn't mean a crucifix on the parlor wall, or grace at meals, or votive lamps blinking before an image of Christ or the Virgin Mary; it doesn't mean the generous use of holy water and the saying of night prayers in common... though it supposes some of these things.

This atmosphere of faith is part of the life of the family; it is their life; it is their sense of the presence of God; it is their charity for one another and for the stranger in their midst; it is a reverence and love for God's word welcomed as family reading; it is a turning to the crucifix or the image of Christ in hours of deep distress and in moments of unexpressible bliss; it is a deep trust in God's providence even when the pantry is bare and the family breadwinner is without work. It is all of these things, and more, which

change a house into a little church.

Perhaps no priest of our times worked harder to make the Christian home a little church than Father Mateo Crowley-Boevy of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Wisely, Father Mateo, as he was affectionately called, went to the heart of the matter by enthroning Christ in the home by means of a simple ceremony.

In a letter addressed to Father Mateo April 27, 1915, Pope Benedict XV wrote: "Beloved Son, we have read your letter with interest and scanned the documents. They give proof of the untiring zeal with which you have devoted yourself for many years to the work of consecrating families to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in this particular way: by placing an image of Our Lord in the most prominent place in the house as on a throne as a sign that Christ reigns visibly in these families."

The Pope, after reviewing the evils of the times which direct their heaviest attack against the home and family, continues his letter to Father Mateo: "... You do well, then, to awaken and spread, above all things, a Christian spirit in the home so that the love of Jesus Christ may permeate the families, and this love reign there as queen."

By this ceremony called the En-

thronement of the Sacred Heart in the Family, Christ Jesus is placed as it were, on a throne as the King of Love, as the very center of domestic life, and there He exercises His benign influence; by the enthronement Christ has become not an overnight guest, but a member of the family, forever the invisible witness of all that happens there. From His throne of honor, the Sacred Heart of Jesus extends to the tired father just returned from his shop, to the mother busy about the home, and to the babies romping underfoot, His graces and blessing.

The enthronement is more than a mere veneration of the image of the Sacred Heart; it is more even than a transient act of consecration; it is really a permanent state of devotedness and love, full of grace and joy.

The enthronement of the Sacred Heart is not an elaborate ceremony. It consists simply in the erection of a throne of love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the house, and the avowal of His sovereign rights over the family. A picture or statue of the Sacred Heart is then set up in a place of honor in the home, and before this image the family daily assembles for their prayers. Thus the house is placed under the mild and secure influence of the Divine Heart, which, in a benediction-bringing

manner, asserts itself in all the joyful and sad occurrences of family life.

The father or mother of the family may read the act of consecration together with their children. All the members of the immediate family should be present. Pictures of the deceased members of the family may be placed beside the image of the Sacred Heart to indicate that, in Christ, the living and the dead are one. For the more solemn ceremony of the enthronement of the Sacred Heart the parish priest should be asked to preside. A leaflet with the prayers and rite of enthronement may be obtained from the Academy of the Sacred Hearts, Fairhaven, Massachusetts. This is the national center of the enthronement for the United States.

The consecration of the family to the Sacred Heart is especially appropriate during the month of June. But there are other ways of dedicating to God the little church that a home is. If we turn to the Roman Ritual we shall find several house blessings for various occasions of the year. For instance, there is the little-known blessing of homes on January 6, Feast of the Epiphany. After entering the house the priest prays the antiphon, canticle of the Blessed Virgin (the Magnificat) and two beautiful prayers which refer

to the mystery of the feast. In conclusion this lovely prayer is said over the house: "Bless, O Lord, Almighty God, this house that it become the shelter of health, chastity, self-conquest, humility, goodness, mildness, obedience to the commandments, and thanksgiving to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. May blessing remain for all time upon this dwelling and them that live herein, through Christ Our Lord. Amen."

There is the blessing of homes on Holy Saturday and during Eastertide. Since the average parish priest is especially busy on Holy Saturday, it is not likely that he will find time to visit the houses of his parishioners. If he does wish to visit the homes of his people between Easter and Trinity Sunday, he may use this significant sacramental which begins with antiphon, versicles, and the following Easter Collect: "Hear us, Holy Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God. And as on their departure from Egypt Thou didst guard the homes of the Israelites from the avenging angel... so likewise send Thy holy angel from heaven to guard, cherish, protect, visit, and defend all who dwell in this house. Amen."

Then in the Roman Ritual under the heading, "Blessing of places destined for a sacred purpose," we find the blessing of homes out-

side of Easter time. The translator of the Roman Ritual, Father Philip Weller, has this to say concerning the sacredness of the home: "...the Christian home is a sacred place in a broader sense. It is also a place of liturgical worship, and therefore very sacred. Often it witnesses the celebration of great mysteries, the sacraments of Eucharist, last anointing, and the perfection of matrimony. In a home worthy of the name of Christian is continued the communal praise of God (family prayer) begun in the church building and continued in the home through family prayer. Here a soul falling asleep in Christ is commended to the merciful hands of its Author... and to the Christian dwelling the Church reaches out with her consecratory hand and dispenses the sacramentals." (Roman Ritual... The Blessings, Vol. III. Translation by Rev. Philip Weller. Bruce, Milwaukee.)

The prayer is very brief. After the usual greeting, "Peace be to this home, and unto all who dwell herein," the priest prays the antiphon of the Asperges and this Collect: "Hear us, O Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God, and deign to send Thy holy angel from heaven to guard, cherish, protect and defend all who dwell in this house. Through Christ Our

(Continued on page 39)

Editor's Note:

That fact is always more wonderful than fiction I always tried to impress on my creative writing class in the seminary. Now, with the publication of this article about a real situation and a brave woman—whose real name we cannot disclose—the old saying is vindicated once again.

GREATER LOVE HATH MARIANNE

ALTHOUGH I had left the world behind me three years ago, this particular morning in July the world seemed to be creeping from niches in my memory sending stowaways dancing brazenly across my meditation book.

Oh, they're always here, waiting for the slightest reminder of a loved mannerism of some forgotten friend or a phrase, a word, a way of saying things, to bring them tumbling out of their hiding places to beg and plead for a thought; and a prayer sends them on their way again. But now even the Scripture was inviting them.

....
"Greater love hath no man..."
I was reading, and then suddenly there was Marianne, pulling at my arm with a perplexed but beseeching look on her face.

Resignedly I closed my book and stared at the Tabernacle, thinking perhaps Marianne would go away. She didn't belong here. Marianne was dead. But Marianne wouldn't

by Anne Penelope Ryan

go away. She just stood there, stubborn and perplexed as she had five years before when we'd both been army nurses at the Jordan field hospital in Missouri.

The novices swishing up the aisle in their white suddenly were the new shift of nurses hurrying down the halls to replace those who had been answering lights all evening. It must be 11 p.m., I thought, bending over my nearly completed chart. I must hurry, for soon Marianne would be waiting for me to go with her for our midnight snack.

I looked up—I hadn't heard her come—but there stood Marianne, leaning over my ward station counter looking at me with a perplexed expression in her eyes. She

smiled rather wearily, and so did I as I clipped my pen in my pocket and reached for my cape.

"Tired?" I asked as we started down the hall.

Marianne's dark eyes crinkled again in a half-hearted smile.

"I guess."

We walked on down the hall in silence, but that wasn't unusual because Marianne and I frequently walked all the way to the kitchen without exchanging more than a sleepy smile.

"Penny, do you ever wonder why you became a nurse?" she asked suddenly. "Sometimes it gets so depressing watching people die and not being able to do anything for them—and sometimes things get so messed up for me..."

I looked at her sidelong, wondering if she and Don had had a spat or if some doctor had given her a bad time. I knew something was happening inside Marianne, that she was diving deeper now and soon would come up with the treasure she was trying to grasp. I knew this outburst had been nothing more than her coming up for air before diving deeper.

Desperately I longed to assure her that right now I was wondering why I had become a nurse. I wanted to tell her that I had fallen in love with the Lover I met

each morning across the Communion rail just as surely as she had met Don—and that I longed with all my being to become His spouse as she had become Don's. But I didn't dare, for Marianne was not a Catholic. As a matter of fact, Marianne only once had mentioned religion and that had been to say that she wasn't much of a churchgoer.

I pondered just what to say to her, but by that time she was holding the door to the kitchen open and other nurses from the night shift were pouring in for a snack. When Marianne carefully selected a table for two in a corner, I knew she was going to tell me her trouble.

"Penny, I don't know a thing about your religion," she began and I held my breath wondering if she had guessed my secret. "But there's something I must understand. Why does the chaplain have a right to tell a patient whether she can or can't submit to an operation that may prolong her life?"

Her question phrased, Marianne then leaned back somewhat easier and explained what had happened. One of her patients in the dependents' ward had asked her to call the chaplain early in the evening.

"She is a young Catholic woman with a serious cardiac condition. Her doctor suggested that she

submit to a sterilization operation to prevent future conception, and she told me she had to talk with the chaplain before she gave her answer. Just before I left her tonight, she told me her answer would be no," Marianne related agitated. "Why—Penny—why is it wrong to try to live?"

I set down my cup of coffee and clasped my hands together—perhaps for a prayer. How could I explain this thing in terms Marianne would understand? And all the time Marianne sat there looking, waiting eagerly, her eyes dark with rebellion yet beseeching me to tell her something that would quell the storm raging within her.

"You'll remember, Marianne, that when you and Don were married—just a few months ago—that you made some promises 'for better or for worse'...remember?"

Marianne nodded.

"Well, a Catholic girl makes those same vows, and for her it is no mere recitation of words, Marianne, but a promise to God—a contract binding her until death. She may not accept the pleasure and the privilege of her state without also accepting the obligations. If she cannot fulfill the obligations without endangering her health or even her life. then

she must forego the pleasures which accompany the obligation."

Marianne pursued the line of thought to the end.

"But what if she is already pregnant and the doctor assures her that she will not be able to carry the baby to term without the loss of her own life?"

For a moment I groped for a situation which Marianne would understand—

"Then she is under an obligation similar to the soldier who can save himself by deserting. She must accept whatever way that will mean the least danger to the unborn child. If she dies, she does so in the line of duty, so to speak, and with the satisfaction that she has not betrayed the trust she asked from God and which He gave to her."

"Oh..." Marianne almost whispered. "I didn't know that."

In the busy months which followed I quite forgot about the incident, and perhaps Marianne did too because that summer Marianne announced happily that she was to become a mother. She and Don were to have a child, and her bubbling plans for their lives together after the war frequently allowed her breakfast to get cold as she drew sketches and house plans on napkins.

Toward the end of summer I knew that Marianne soon would

have to quit because she was having no end of discomfort although she tried to hide it. Her eyes glowed and she and Don seemed happier together than they'd ever been.

On Monday night at 11 p.m. I waited for Marianne to come to my station, but when she did not come by 11:15 I knew something had happened. I had been gone over the week end on a pass and hadn't seen her since Thursday night.

My mind was filled with questions as I walked down to the kitchen, but one of the nurses stopped me as I started in the door and answered all my fears with another question.

"Say, it's too bad about Marianne, isn't it?"

"What about Marianne?" I asked eagerly. "Where is she?"

"Oh—hadn't you heard? She's over in the nurses' ward. They think she's got Hodgkin's disease."

Oh no, dear God. I breathed under my breath—not that with its slow torturous attack upon glands and spleen, and then surely death—to her and her baby.

I knew I couldn't eat and I wondered if Marianne was sleeping. As fast as I could go without running I groped my way to the ward set aside for nurses. Through her

half-opened door I saw a little light and I slipped inside the door before the nurse on duty could see me.

When she looked up and saw me there she cried, "Oh, Penny, I've been needing you!" and broke into sobs that shook her whole body.

I put my arms around her and told her, like a child, to be quiet.

"Be quiet, Marianne," I whispered, "and tell me what has happened. I'm here now..."

Marianne shook her head, and finally the sobs subsided and she whispered, "Didn't you tell me that abortion was wrong?"

Suddenly my mind was alive again with the conversation we'd had about the cardiac patient, and my heart ached for Marianne who was clutching at this Truth I had tossed out so impersonally, but which now hung over her to accept or reject.

"Yes, Marianne. I did. And it is wrong."

"Then why did Dr. Malose, who is a Catholic, tell me that I should submit to a therapeutic abortion to prolong my life?" she cried and the tears again cascaded down her cheeks.

"I don't know why he said it, Marianne. Perhaps he has forgotten that principle applies to all whether they're Catholic or not. But it is wrong and will never con-

tribute to lasting peace of mind or future happiness."

Marianne leaned her head against my shoulder and sobbed out her own diagnosis. They hadn't told her for sure, she cried, but she didn't need the finding of three laboratories to confirm what she had already guessed.

Marianne sobbed to Penny to tell her the justice of it—why when she had just begun to live, and this new life had just begun to live in her—why should she have to decide. She knew that she would die eventually, but why did it have to be so soon? Without the baby the doctor had said it might not be so soon—but each time she thought of it she had remembered me and the cardiac patient.

For a long while I let her sob. Finally she quit from sheer exhaustion. Softly I talked to her about Don—about love—and now I dared to share my secret with her because Marianne was approaching the very foot of a sacrificial altar and she was groping to understand the meaning of sacrifice unto death.

She seemed quieter and calmer when I finished. She told me that she and Don were going away tomorrow to think over what to do.

I said good night to her. And the next day I said good-by to her and Don, and prayed to God to

give them some sort of faith in the darkness of their crisis.

Toward the end of the week I returned to my room one afternoon and found the door unlocked. Marianne was lying on my bed reading a book I'd left lying on my night stand. She was smiling and as I looked in her eyes I saw Marianne's decision before she spoke of it.

"I have come to tell you good-by, Penny," she said, getting up off the bed. "Don and I are being transferred to California. Oh, Penny, after the first two days, we had such a beautiful time at the lake. It was like another honeymoon, except even more wonderful. We have such a wonderful marriage...." she hesitated.... "so wonderful we can't let it shrivel here under the pitying eyes of our friends. We shall go to California—and there our son will be born...."

I reached out and squeezed her hand. We sat there a moment in a silence that transcended words.

"You know, Penny, ours is such a wonderful marriage that it would be a pity to leave mere memories of barren pleasures, wouldn't it? I'm not afraid this way. I'll be giving life, Penny, not facing death...."

Her eyes were misty and so

were mine because I knew it had not been easy for her to convince Don that it would be beautiful to cut her own life short in order that he might have a son. I held her close for a moment and in my heart blessed the two souls enclosed in the body of this young woman.

And then we parted.

There had been letters—letters from Marianne with pictures of little Donnie who had arrived in time for Christmas. There were happy accounts of the wonder and miracle of watching life unfold in

her little son—but there was never any mention of her own illness—not until Don wrote a year ago that Marianne had laid down her life.

I looked helplessly toward the Tabernacle, but I couldn't beg God's pardon for the distraction of Marianne. For deep in my heart Marianne had become a prayer—a meditation—that filled my heart with the realization that souls may not always possess the truth, but they do possess that degree of heroism and charity which is God's measure of supreme love.

Your voice gives you away

Miss Replier recalls the reply of the Papal Chamberlain to Prince Henry of Bismark when that Nobleman being in attendance upon the Emperor pushed rudely and unbidden into Pope Leo's audience chamber.

"I am PRINCE HENRY OF BISMARCK," shouted the German.

"That," said the urbane Italian, "explains, but does not excuse, your conduct."

Charles Lamb was giving a talk at a mixed gathering and someone in the crowd hissed. A deep silence followed. Finally, Lamb calmly said: "There are only three things that hiss: a goose, a snake, and a fool. Come forth and be identified."

Panorama from My Soapbox Window

Editor's Note: Some families who cannot afford to travel this summer may feel sorry for themselves because they can't park the family car on the brim of the Grand Canyon, or soak the family "tootsies" in the Gulf of Mexico, or stretch out lazily on some sunny California beach, but as a matter of fact, the thrills of travel are much over-rated as well as expensive; if one knows how, one can get a thrill from the panorama of life and color as seen from the kitchen window; the author of the following sketch is a pie-making, dish-washing, diaper-changing mama of four hungry "gremlins," and to hear her tell it, she gets a kick out of the ever-shifting scene from her Soapbox kitchen window in rural Ohio. She says it's cheaper and almost as much fun as going lots of places you've never been before. Maybe she's right.

My home, the Soapbox, stands on the break of Hollyhock Hill, and to the south of it two other hills converge. The kids and I have named them Sagecrest Hill and Clover Hill. A white ribbon of gravel road swings past the Soapbox, sprawls down the Hollyhock and rattles across a little wooden bridge spanning Sycamore Run just where the twin apple tree grows.

by Elsa Parker

The hollows are all lined and the hilltops fringed with graceful swaying willows, sturdy sycamores, trim pin oak, redbud, dogwood, poplar and elm. Beneath the sheltering branches alongside the cool little rivulet grow the shy violets, dainty anemones, wood fern and bloodroot.

I've stood in my Soapbox kitchen for many seasons, dirty dishes stacked up to my ears, and soapsuds floating up to my chin; as I absent-mindedly swished the dishes through the suds I feasted my eyes on the panorama that faces my kitchen window. Had I the fingers of a Michelangelo, or the brush of a Botticelli I would paint that scene and send it to you, and it would look just as appetizing as the luscious photographs you see on the travel folders. But even if I could paint like Michelangelo I wouldn't be able to decide just what phase of that scene to fix on my canvas.

It is always the same, yet it is ever changing. I've watched it lie cold and immobile under a blanket of snow etched across with the stark black tracery of naked



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trees. I've seen it transformed to a fairy-like winter wonderland with the trees wearing crystal-coated tiaras. I've watched its resurrection from the sleep of winter as it began to pulse with the awakening life of spring. The hillsides and trees put on the first delicate green tracery, and then almost overnight the whole scene burst into full bloom; redbud and violets, white plum and dogwood blossoms, daisies and wild roses blended into an unforgettable picture. I've seen my living canvas outside my window when it lay torpid under a scorching August sun, and I've seen it gulp greedily at long-awaited rain. I've seen it

lush with clover, velvety golden with new wheat, gracefully swaying with tall corn blowing in the breeze. I've watched it flame into October beauty of rich reds and gold and then fade slowly into a dry sober brown as the leaves castanetted in a dance of death in a last burst of farewell as they fluttered away. I've seen it wide awake and tempest-tossed in a vivid summer storm, and watched it softly sleeping under a gentle watchful moon. No canvas could capture all of its moods; no living artist could thrill the eye with as many masterpieces as I can see from my Soapbox art gallery.

But let me tell you of one perfect day not so long ago. Early one morning just before sun-up I was roused from sleep by the twitter of the waking birds beneath the eaves of the Soapbox. The *Te Deum* of the early risers sounded sweet and clear. Later I opened the kitchen door and stepped out into the beauty of a new-born day. The gentle rosy fingers of early morning were softly brushing away the shadows of night. The green hills wore a pearly opalescence left by a pre-dawn *Asperges* of dew. The sky was veiled with gossamer chiffon clouds. The sunlight flickered across the filmy sky, and then deepened into a warm blessing of pale gold. A host of feathered Benedictines and

brown Franciscan choristers were chirping a merry *Benedictus* as "night has passed and the day is at hand." A little white Dominican came clucking to my doorstep begging for biscuit crumbs. Indeed, God was in His heaven and all was right with the world on Hollyhock Hill.

Between answering the telephone, cooking meals for my hungry Bossman whenever he finds time to eat, writing checks, and stuffing food in the mouths of four voracious "gremlins" . . . I slip to the window and scan the magic panorama outside my Soapbox. I can hear the feathered folk busily going about their work, singing with all their hearts. As the sun drops low over the hills they chant a touching *Magnificat*. Afar off, a turtle dove intones a mournful *Agnus Dei*, and across the western sky a killdeer flutters

as he sings a sharp *Kyrie Eleison*. Nearby Brother Redbird chimes in with a fervent "*pater, pater, pater*." It is a scene to warm the heart of St. Francis himself.

A gentle evening breeze counts *Aves* on the nodding flowers; sparrows chirp a litany with many a staccato "*pro nobis*" while the trees stand vigil like dark-cowled monks. The sinking sun casts a final ray of benediction over my hills. My songster friends settle themselves for the night with a few farewell chirps of Compline. Stars like votive lamps come aglow in the sky; the moon swings into view like a giant sanctuary lamp indicative of God's presence in His Cathedral of nature. Peace falls across my blessed hills of Sycamore Valley—the hills of home—equalled by none. You don't believe me? Come, and I'll show you.

Inward Chuckle



Some people have a grand time in the world, and these are the ones who view life with a merry, inward chuckle. I don't think you can really enjoy life to the full unless you possess a sense of humor. There are, of course, many things which happen in one's life which are serious, but the humorous person despite these dark hours is still able to laugh most of the time, both at himself and at others.

—Octavus Roy Cohen



*The joys of human love
are only resting places
in a longer journey*

Love in Marriage

by Joseph Sprug

LOVE is perhaps the plainest, most obvious reality in this world. It is what men live by, it is what men live for, yet it is a thing that presents man with the deepest, most profound mystery. As a man adds to the sum of vital experiences perfecting his personality, he gains a deeper understanding both of the reality and the mystery of love. The creation resulted from a pouring forth of love, and the creature man is destined for heavenly union with the Creator, Who is Love.

Man, however, could never believe in that destiny were it not for the glimpses and foreshadows which the joys of living present of that Love which is perfect. Robert Hugh Benson said that a man is the sum of all the things that he has ever loved. But man taking account of himself is never satisfied with his summation. Every flight of human love is directed towards the ultimate object of all love, namely God, "Who

is fairer, better, higher than all his works." The joys of human love are only resting places in a longer journey. Man and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, man and fellowman, all must sincerely love one another. Looking on these human loves gives us "simple keys to what cold faith calls mysteries."

Marriage demands the highest type of love, a love which is only excelled in this life by the love of a religious who is consecrated with "single eye" to God. In marriage, as in all objects of physical desire, man encounters the law of restraint. Because of original sin the inclination to love tends to drown itself in self-satisfaction, but time, faith, and reason have shown that the only salvation of love lies in self-sacrifice. Unlimited desire rushes to debauchery; desire controlled by reasonable self-sacrifice means a peaceful old age and a life of high eternal merit in the state of matrimony.

All direct quotations are from Coventry Patmore's poem, "A Wedding Sermon."

The soul under control is not swamped by over-indulgence in passionate desire. The soul that is self-satisfied has forgotten that man is on a journey. In the experience of licit joys—no matter how ecstatic—"thoughts come to each how far he is from home."

"For all delights of earthly love
Are shadows of the heavens, and
move

As other shadows do; they flee
From him that follows them;
and he

Who flies, for ever finds his feet
Embraced by their pursuings
sweet."

However sublime in content, these lines are the simple expression of the great truth about earthly love. Every man who has ever felt his soul stir with the desire for and the possession of a created thing knows that a joy possessed leaves the soul still seeking further and climbing higher in its search for the All-satisfying.

Marriage gives man the most tremendous, soul-absorbing experience of any act of love. However, the prospective bride and groom, the "unwrought material of marriage," have yet to learn that it is not in this mutual love as expressed in experience but in mutual love under obedience to God's law that marriage remains thrilling, mysterious, "inviolable through the year or years." Marriage should be unique; two in but ONE flesh. Absolute pre-marital virginity is the best insurance of a successful marriage:

"Verily, choice not matters much,
If but the woman's truly such,
And the young man has led the
life
Without which how shall e'er the
wife
Be the ONE woman in the
world?"

In the first ecstasy of love one regards the other as the embodiment of perfection; but after twenty-four hours a day of constant association one fault and imperfection after another make themselves known. That is why Chesterton remarked: "The success of the marriage comes after the failure of the honeymoon." Reality bares the illusions of perfection, and the triumph of the adventure of matrimony depends finally on personal integrity, on devotion to duty, and on the habitual exercise of faith, hope, and humility in the sacrament and in each other.

Man and wife form an indissoluble partnership wherein equality is wed to equality. But "two" implies difference, and difference implies distance and distrust. It is the duty of love to abolish the distance and remove the distrust—and at the same time to respect the differences in two unique individuals who cannot always have identical preferences and moods. Hence:

"... leave ill alone!

Who tries to mend his wife succeeds

As he who knows not what he needs."

Do not make impossible demands on the removal of hitherto undiscovered flaws and unexpected differences which must exist in essentially indi-

vidual imperfect beings.

Despite the ardor of the promises made in the fervor of first love, despite the logical and psychological absurdities of many of today's love songs, man and woman cannot normally give their lives entirely to each other. The man who is temperamentally "uxorious" cannot properly be called a man; he is less than a man, for he makes woman the center of his life whereas man was complete even before woman was created. Be yourself—even when you are in love! Only he can command respect who keeps himself in proper relationship to God and to his lady.

The summer fruit never tastes quite so good as the promise of it in the spring flower's beauty. "Use dulls the bliss" of love. Therefore man has to expect more from marriage than satisfied desire. He has to have faith in the fact that his travels are not over:

"Though love is all of earth that's dear,
Its home, my children, is not here:
The pathos of eternity
Does in its fullest pleasure sigh."

In marriage man has opportunity to work out his salvation. If a man has learned the joy of giving, if he has learned that the greatest acts of love are in self-sacrifice, then his love in matrimony is assured of "increasing endlessly with height." Man must love his wife not only as much as himself but as if she were the very thing that contained himself!

What of the basis for the permanency of love? This is beauty, but not necessarily physical beauty. A person may seem beautiful at first glance, but there is always some imperfection which, if dwelt upon, will wreck the house of love that was built on physical beauty alone. A person who has beauty to provide attractiveness may neglect more important qualities. There is beauty in personal dignity, in the practice of Christian virtue, in skill in cooking, and in home economics. Beauty that lacks these latter things were a very poor object to pursue. On the other hand, love transforms the virtuous:

"And he who is but just and kind
And patient, shall for guerdon find,
Before long, that the body's bond
Is all else utterly beyond
In power of love to actualize
The soul's bond which it signifies,
And even to deck a wife with
grace
External in the form and face.

A five-years' wife, and not yet fair?
Blame let the man, not Nature, bear!"

Just as winter grass is dead and brown, but the summer sun revives the green and the flowers, so love makes beauty abound where all before seemed drab and dull. This effected beauty is not a fraudulent chimera of blind love. Every person has a store of beauty, but it takes love to open the hidden door. As St. John of the Cross said: "Where there is no love, sow love, and you will bring forth love!"

I don't know them by name and, so far as names go, they don't know me from Adam. I'm close to fifty and far from nifty—and as for the women, well it's been a long time since anyone turned to whistle at their ankles. Yet I like these faded beauties—beauties, that is, of another era, and I rather think they've got a spot in their collective heart for me. For neither rain nor sleet, nor cold keeps us apart for more than a day, and on many a day as I nod *good morning* to our Lord in the tabernacle I wonder what stirs them out of their warm beds and fetches them to these pews while their neighbors are just turning over for that last hour of solid comfort in the arms of Morpheus.

Guess we must be a queer lot, me and my bunch of old women. We really don't have to go to Mass every day. There's no law, civil or ecclesiastical, that says we have to get up at six and plow through all kinds of weather to meet in a church where on winter mornings even the saints in the stained glass look with disfavor on the cold radiators. But there we are, and no newspaper reporter present to press us for interviews or to give us a write-up in the local journal. Imagine, no news story about us or about the sacrifice of comfort we make every morning. We must be very commonplace.

We're in good company, though. Our Father Ed is with us. When we're a little ahead of time, as often happens, we can see him leaving the rectory, a young-old little man, a bit stooped, the cobwebs of sleep still in his eyes. Yet when a short while



Me and a Bunch of

later he stands before the altar or when we receive from his hands that which is our very life he is the dignity of God and man to us, even though the radiators are cold and he is shivering in his bones.

It has happened over the course of years that our Father Ed overslept. Twice, anyway. And as we knelt in our pews wondering what may have happened to him, it wouldn't be long before the old women would look at me and hint with their eyes that I ought to look into things. And I'd do just that, going to the rectory and ringing the door bell until I aroused him. He'd been out late, sick calls, somehow just hadn't heard the alarm clock go off. And there would be an almost audible sigh of relief among the women when I'd get back to church and indicate with a smile that he'd

by Stephen Joseph

*This ought to be
for men only---
this reverie about
daily Mass-going---
but the women will miss
something, if they don't
read it too.*

ch of Old Women

be along presently.

We're a clannish lot, me and my bunch of old women. We're the regulars. Others join us from time to time, but they don't seem to stay long. They come for a while for special intentions, maybe because someone in their family is sick, maybe because someone died, maybe because they are having a struggle of it financially, maybe for other reasons. They come for a week or two, perhaps even for a month, then we see them no more except on Sundays. Most are women or girls. Men at weekday Mass are a rarity, like oysters out of season. That's not to say you don't see any. But it's only now and then, for a day or two, and usually they leave before the Last Gospel. They have their excuses, some legitimate, some not.

But we're the regulars, me and

my bunch of old women. We know each other, we understand each other, with or without an introduction. It isn't just intentions or petitions that bring us together at the Communion rail; it's something deeper and more important than that, and if you were to ask us what that is I don't think that any of us could give you the right name for it. We're not much on theology, of that I'm sure. What we know is more of a feeling than anything you can expound with dogmatic rhetoric.

Our feelings however don't always keep us awake. There have been times when I fell asleep somewhere among the small print in the missal. Not long enough, though, to miss Communion, for one of my old women would be sure to come to my pew, tap me on the shoulder and let me know the Lord didn't approve this sort of thing. That kindness worked two ways. Call it a reciprocal agreement. For there have been times when I'd leave my pew and waken one of my faded beauties from forty winks say along about the third or fourth decade of the rosary in her hands. And she'd look up with a kind of embarrassed smile and somehow let me know with guileless eyes that she'd stayed up half the night with a sick husband or friend or was just plain tired from some ailment of her own.

Of course it isn't easy to go to Mass every morning, nor to fast every morning. Not for me, anyway. No use kidding anybody. Besides, I'm not what you'd call the saintly kind. I've got an eight-hour

a day job among a lot of hard characters who drive trucks for a living, and trying to put on pietistic airs among that crew wouldn't quite go over. No, I'm a pretty rough character myself. Yet for all that I manage to keep in mind that life on earth is rather a short article, and there is a thing or two I want definitely in my favor when it comes time to stand before the Eternal Judge. I have a good idea that, whatever my faults, He'll go a bit easy on me when He looks up the record and notes the long litany of morning Masses.

I have an idea too that He'll just have to be gallant to my bunch of old women. Their faces may be wrinkled and their hands gnarled and their bodies a bit sagged from childbearing, but yet somehow they've grown beautiful in His service, and since they just wouldn't

think of starting a day without first paying Him homage, would it then be logical that He'd look unkindly on them at the end? I think not.

I have another idea too, or perhaps it is only an afterthought. Anyhow, it amounts to almost a conviction that my bunch of old women are going to look mighty beautiful up there in Heaven, a lot more beautiful than the pin-ups that get into the papers and magazines down here and who are sound asleep at the hour when Father Ed ascends to the altar. For that matter, maybe there is a chance that I'll look a bit all right myself. Maybe I'll get back the hair I lost, and the teeth, and be rid for all time of this rheumatism that has me wondering how I'll get to church tomorrow morning. The weatherman predicts rain, and that sure doesn't agree with my old bones.



Happiness is much more dependent on the mental attitude than on external resources. This would be an absurdly obvious platitude, were it not for the fact that ninety-nine out of a hundred persons do not believe it.

—William Lyon Phelps

The MEDAL

by Mary Fabyan Windeatt

Story

Sister Catherine Labouré has had the Miraculous Medal made, at the instruction of the Blessed Virgin. At Enghien, where Sister Catherine is the convent cook, there is an old man, close to death and unrepentant. Sister Catherine secretly leaves a medal with him. Later, he seems better in soul and body.

Chapter 11

AS JOHN listened to the rest of the story—how twenty-three-year-old Zoe Catherine Labouré, with the help of her brother Hubert and his wife Jane, had finally prevailed upon her father to let her enter the Daughters of Charity, he felt a welling up of sympathy within himself such as he had not experienced in many years. What a touching story! To think that a twelve-year-old girl should have so much love for God that she could spend almost another twelve years in preparing herself by prayer and suffering to do what she felt was His Will for her!

"Sister..." he began, then fell silent. What was the use of ask-

ing questions? To love God as Sister Catherine loved Him was surely a grace given to few people. For men and women like himself who had spent nearly a whole lifetime in sin—who had cheated, cursed, lied, stolen....

Sister Catherine seemed to read these thoughts. "John, the good God loves each one of us—oh, so much!—no matter what we have done to offend Him."

"But I don't see...."

"Listen, John. What would you like most in the whole world?"

"I? Why, I...."

"You'd like to be happy, wouldn't you? Really and truly happy?"

"Y-yes."

"And you think that's impossible!"

"Oh, not for you, Sister. You're naturally kind and good. But for me...."

Sister Catherine leaned forward earnestly. "John, it's true that I've been given far more graces than you to help me to be happy. But isn't that because I've spent almost my whole life in asking for them?"

"Well. . ."

"Now tell me this. Do you love God? Really and truly?"

John shifted uneasily. "No, Sister. I'm afraid I don't."

"Well, have you ever asked Him to help you to love Him?"

"No."

"And why not?"

"I...I guess I just never thought about it."

Suddenly Sister Catherine began to talk so naturally and confidently about God's desire to be loved, even by the most sinful and discouraged of souls, that John was impressed in spite of himself. How perfectly sure she seemed of the things she was saying! That people were meant to be happy, even in this world; that the only way to achieve this was to love God and say "yes" to what He wants, to do one's duties faithfully, without complaint, and to get others to do the same. Even more. That sadness and discontent existed in the world chiefly because people were not *prepared* to be happy. They had never made an effort to know God, so that they might love and serve Him properly. Instead, they tried to know and love *things*—only to be disappointed at their emptiness. Yet anyone, no matter how poor or sinful, could prepare for real happiness and peace of mind. A fervent and continued prayer to

know and love God, so that one might serve Him properly, was always answered. Then one had arrived, so to speak, at the threshold of joy.

John listened in silence, an expression of wonder on his face. "But I can't believe that happiness is that simple!" he said at last. "And I never thought that we could... well, *work* for it!"

Sister Catherine smiled. "It is, John! And we *can* work for it. But there's one more thing." "What?"

The young nun slipped her hand into her pocket and drew out a Miraculous Medal. Here, she announced, was a likeness of a human creature who had loved God more than anyone else could ever love Him. And even in the midst of bitter trials and sufferings, she had been happy in a way that one can scarcely imagine.

"John, if you want to learn how to love God a good deal, and so to be happy in His service, why not ask the Blessed Virgin to help you? Why not wear this little medal around your neck?"

"B-but. . ."

"I promise you one thing. If you do wear Our Lady's medal, and say that little prayer every day: *O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee*, wonderful things are going to happen."

John smiled, a bit wryly. "I still can't believe that God is much concerned with me, Sister—whether I'm happy or not. But to please you—because after all *you* have been good to me—better than anyone else around here..."

"You'll wear the medal?"

"Yes."

"And say the prayer, too?"

"Well..."

"Please, John! That's very important!"

"All right. I'll say the prayer, too."

"Every day?"

"Every day."

Chapter 12

NATURALLY there was great astonishment at Enghien when it was discovered that old John had consented to wear a Miraculous Medal around his neck. Father Aladel was as surprised as anyone, and lost no time in questioning Sister Catherine about it.

"Sister, you don't really think that old man is going to be converted, do you?" he asked eagerly.

Sister Catherine hesitated. "I really couldn't say, Father. All I know is that I've put his case in Our Lady's hands. *She'll* look after him."

The priest looked closely at the young nun before him. "I think

there's more to it than that, though. Come, now—*isn't* there?"

Sister Catherine lowered her eyes. "Well..."

"You've been praying for him constantly, haven't you? Especially at Mass?"

"Well... yes, Father."

"And you've been making sacrifices, too?"

"Y-yes."

For a moment Father Aladel was silent. Long ago he had discovered what Sister Catherine's sacrifices were. Never complaining about the hardships of working in a hot kitchen; never asking for privileges; kneeling for private prayer in the chapel when it would have been quite in order to sit; fasting on various days...

"It certainly would be wonderful if old John were converted," he observed finally. Then, after a moment: "Sister, tell me this. Does the Blessed Virgin ever appear to you these days?"

Sister Catherine shook her head. "No, Father. I've never seen her since I left the Motherhouse. But don't you remember that she told me this, just before I received the habit: 'My child, you will not see me any longer, although you will hear my voice in your meditations?'"

Father Aladel nodded thoughtfully. "Yes, I remember. But I was just wondering..."

"No, Father. She never comes any more. But I do hear her speaking to me at certain times."

"And what does she say?"

Once again Sister Catherine hesitated. How could she put into words what Our Lady had told her? That within less than forty years troubles of all kinds would come to France? Revolution, bloodshed, martyrdom for young and old? That even now, despite the many graces being won for them through devotion to the Miraculous Medal, there were several among the Daughters of Charity and the Priests of the Mission—the two religious families which Saint Vincent de Paul had founded—who were not faithful to their duties? Who spent only a little time in prayer and spiritual reading? Who preferred the company of rich and important people to that of the poor and sick?

Yet Father Aladel was her confessor, sent by God to be her spiritual guide, and so Sister Catherine did her best to recall for him Our Lady's words. But when she had finished speaking and was about to lapse into silence, a sudden thought struck her.

"Father, do you remember when the Blessed Virgin came to me the second time at the Motherhouse, some of the rings on her fingers were bright and sparkling while others gave forth no light at all?"

The priest nodded. "Yes, Sister. I remember. You told me then that the rings without any light represented the graces for which we forget to ask."

"That's right. Oh, how I wish you could get people to understand this—*really* understand it!"

"I? But how can I do anything?"

"Why, in your sermons, Father. Our Lady can give so many wonderful things, if only people will ask her for them. But they ask for so many...well, *unimportant* things instead! Can't you say something about this when you talk to people?"

For a moment the priest was silent. He had often thought about this very matter, and had made several efforts to discover just what the graces were for which people—himself included—never thought to pray. But it had not been easy. Undoubtedly there were so many! For instance, the grace of a cheerful disposition. How many people ever thought to ask the Blessed Virgin for this? Or for the grace to recognize and accept the trials of everyday life as blessings from God? Or to love all men as brothers, and to wish them well? Or to be contented with one's state in life? Or to understand and appreciate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass?

"Well, what *are* the graces for which we forget to pray?" he asked. "And how would you explain things in a sermon if you were in my place?"

For a moment Sister Catherine did not reply. Then a soft light crept into her eyes. "Why not put it this way, Father? Tell people to ask the Blessed Virgin for the grace to love God as she did when she was their age."

At these words, so simply spoken, a wave of admiration swept through the priest's heart. Here,

surely, was a request that only a few people would ever think of making. Yet certainly it covered everything. Indeed, it was nothing short of a perfect act of love. Why, if one offered this little prayer frequently, while being faithful to the duties of one's state in life, there was no reason to be afraid of anything! Not even of sudden death. For a perfect act of love could bring even the most ordinary soul straight to heaven.

(To be continued)

OTHER BOOKS BY MARY FABYAN WINDEATT

LITTLE QUEEN

The "Little Way" of St. Therese is brought within reach of the little ones through Mary Fabyan Windeatt's re-telling of the Autobiography of St. Therese of the Child Jesus. By use of the first person Miss Windeatt retains all the charm of the original. Simplified to meet the grasp of young minds it is nevertheless spiritually solid enough to interest adults. Illustrated by Donald Walpole. 228 pages. Price \$2.00

THE PARISH PRIEST OF ARS

Again Miss Windeatt has made successful use of the autobiographical style. This time to bring to her young readers the story of St. John Marie Vianney, the Curé of Ars. An authentic and satisfying presentation of his struggle to attain to the Priesthood and the colorful experiences that followed his ordination, this book aims at encouraging priestly vocations. Illustrated by Gedge Harmon. 164 pages. Price \$2.00



by Gabriela Mistral

Sow without looking upon the earth where the seed falls. You are lost if you turn to the countenances of the others. Your glance inviting their reply will strike them as an invitation to praise you and even if they agree you are right, they will refuse to make this reply out of pride. Give your word and follow eagerly without turning your head. When they see you have gone some distance, they will accept your seed; perhaps they will kiss it tenderly and carry it to their hearts.

Don't stamp your portrait on the metal of your doctrine. That will deprive you of the love of the selfish ones and the selfish are the world.

Speak to your brethren in the shadows of the late afternoon in order to obscure your countenance and disguise your voice to the point that it is indistinguishable from any other voice. Make yourself forgotten, make yourself forgotten. . . . Do as the branch that does not keep any trace of the fruit that it allows to fall to the ground.

Toward the most business-like, those who claim to be least interested in dreams, let them know

To a Sower

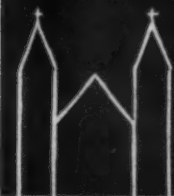
the infinite value of a dream and refrain from aggrandizing him who dreamed it.

Do as the father did who forgave his enemy on surprising him in the act of embracing his son. Suffer yourself to be embraced in your marvelous vision of redemption. Regard It in silence and smile....

Let the sacred joy of entering into thought be sufficient for you; let the solitary and divine savor of its Infinite sweetness suffice for you. It is a mystery in which God and your soul are present. Shall you not surrender to that tremendous witness? Knowing once you have possessed it you will not forget.

God also maintains that modest silence because He is the Humble One. He has poured forth His creatures and the beauty of things through hills and valleys, silently, with less noise than the grass makes in growing. Let the lovers of things come and regard them, get to know them, become enraptured with them, tenderly holding them close. Never give your vision a name. It is silent, silent, and it smiles.

from Commonweal



NEWSMO

April 9th Easter Sunday. Many visitors participated with us in the joyous celebration of Christ's Resurrection. Amid the cheerful song of Alleluia and wishes of "Happy Easter," the morning program called for a Pontifical High Mass by Father Abbot. During the Mass Father Lucien delivered a well-worded sermon on the meaning of "Alleluia." In the afternoon, after Vespers, the Abbey Concert Band entertained in the College Gym. The Band, under the direction of Father John, played such numbers as "Poet, Peasant, and Light Cavalryman," "Waltz King," "Military Escort," and the like. The Seminary Octette sang several numbers in the second part of the program. Mr. J. J. McGowan, a Seminarian, acted as Master of Ceremonies throughout the concert. With the help of several others he set the house in a roar of laughter with his own variety program amid the beat of drums and the sound- ing of trumpet.

11th-15th Our two Rectors, Father Anselm of the Major Seminary, and Father Herman of the Minor Seminary, attended the convention of the National Catholic Educational Association

held in New Orleans. This was the 47th Annual Meeting of the Association and the basic theme centered on "Education for International Understanding." The N.C.E. A. is divided into several sections: the Seminary Section, College and University Department, Secondary School and Elementary School departments, and so on. Members may attend the meetings of those sections of greater interest to them. Father Anselm delivered a paper on "The Seminarian's Vacation" at one of the meetings held by the Seminary Department.

16th Father Idephonse, who had gone to Europe for a short visit, returned to the Abbey. He had many experiences to recount of his traveling as well as of what he had seen in the Old Country. But his recollections were cut short by his being appointed to a parish in Milbank, South Dakota. Leaving his belongings unpacked, he hastened to catch the first train out to his new destination.

18th "Peace and War in the Far East" was the topic of a speech delivered by the Rev. John Duffy of the Toledo Diocese.

Father Duffy was the former Chief of Chaplains on Bataan under General MacArthur. He spoke a few words about a former alumnus of our Seminary who was an Army Chaplain in the recent World War and who gave his life for his country. The alumnus-chaplain referred to was Father Thomas Seccina, ordained in 1935. After this introduction Father Duffy went on to relate his own many and varied experiences. Too, he expressed his own convictions about our Eastern brethren and stressed that there is an urgent and immediate need for the establishment of seminaries for a native clergy.

31st

Falstaff, of Shakespeare's **Henry IV**, once more came to life on our stage here at St. Meinrad. The Minor Seminary Genesians (named after St. Genesius, patron of actors) presented **Henry IV** for the community in the evening at seven o'clock. It was ten o'clock before Shakespeare's admirers filed out of the crowded gym. The three hours seemed but three quarter-hours, so smoothly, efficiently, and steadily did the play move along. One gathered from the dexterous acting and proficient stage management that long hours of practice and hard labor had preceded the performance. Father Clement and Father Gerard, directors of the play, were not without their worries. About a month before the play, Jack Gerken, one of the leading actors, had

to go home for dental work. Another was called home because of sickness in the family. Replacements had to be found, coached, and made ready for the big event. Even during the performances problems arose: the Prince of Wales started to lose his voice; lemons were procured and the day was saved. It was the opinion of all that these young performers had each acted his part well, achieving the common goal: an excellent presentation of **Henry IV**. Our sincere congratulations.

30th

Our readers will be sorry to hear that on this date Frank Schmidt died at Louisville, Kentucky, survived by his wife and five children. "Pop," as Mr. Schmidt was affectionately known, was introduced to Grail readers last May in the article entitled "Pop's Little Town," which was later reprinted in the **Catholic Digest**. Mr. Schmidt is the father of Sister Angelica, Sister Majella, Brother Augustine, and Father Nicholas, all of whom are Benedictines.



The Servant of God, Brother Meinrad



MONTHLY NOVENA-15th to 23rd

All who wish their petitions or intentions prayed for through the intercession of the Servant of God, Brother Meinrad, O.S.B., please send them in to **THE GRAIL** Office, St. Meinrad, Indiana before the 15th of the month. A Novena of Masses is offered each month for the glorification and canonization of Brother Meinrad and for all intentions sent in.

I have prayed many times and made Novenas to Brother Meinrad for favors. Two that I have recently received are the healing of my leg without an operation and the sale of a house by my son. This house was put up for sale on Friday and Monday the deal went through. By Tuesday everything was signed. I can't thank Brother Meinrad enough and I will continue praying to him. Mrs. R.E.L., Indiana.

I am sending five dollars as a thanksgiving offering for a favor received through the intercession of Brother Meinrad and St. Anne. I had an annoying itch that has been helped since I asked their intercession. D.A.R., Del.

Please publish the receipt of a special favor obtained through the intercession of Brother Meinrad. Enclosed is a stipend for a Mass of thanksgiving. P.W., Indiana.

I wish to express my thanks to Brother Meinrad for several favors. Several weeks ago I had a terrible pain in my side, so I prayed to Brother Meinrad and held the picture on my side. Soon the pain left. In thanksgiving I am sending an offering for a Mass for his canonization. I have great faith in this holy Brother. J.S., Kansas.

Enclosed is a small offering in thanksgiving to Brother Meinrad for helping us in saving a life. Little Rosemarie weighed three pounds at birth with very little chance to live. We promised publication to the Sacred Heart and Brother Meinrad if she pulled through. Rosemarie went home this week weighing seven pounds. Her parents and we are very grateful to the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Mother and Brother Meinrad.

Benedictine Sisters, So. Dakota.

Through the intercession of Brother Meinrad a bad debt was collected. This is just one of the many times he has come to my aid.

Mrs. L.H.S., Tenn.

SPIRITUAL BOOK SELECTION



The Law of Love

Condensed from **CHRIST IN OUR BRETHREN** by Raoul Plus, S.J., a Grail Publication

A Scribe came and asked our Lord which was the first commandment of all.

"And Jesus answered him: ... thou shalt love the Lord thy God ... And the second is like to it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour." And our Lord, in order to see whether the lesson has been taken in by his interlocutor, asks him to repeat the words, and he says: "To love one's neighbour as one's self is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices."

Do we appreciate as we ought the wonders and the sublime duties which this precept enjoins? Each Christian soul is another Christ. Our divine Master multiplies himself not only in the Holy Eucharist but also in Holy Baptism; by proxy he is all over the world; he lives in us and in countless others; our brethren constitute an enormous army of Christs. Have I the artistic sense of the true Christian artist to discern behind the human features

the divine resemblance and the eternal destiny of that soul? These baptized men and women who surround me and press against me, are they really my brethren? and, if so, does my fraternal spirit rest upon a spiritual foundation? Is it in God that I love them? Is it God in them that I love?

Through the divine bond which unites us all I am linked not only with those now living; my friendly relations stretch beyond the short horizon of the moment. This divine Presence (of God in each one of us) is the basis of our union in spite of the limits of time and space. In God we can always hold converse with and help one another. Because he is living within us, nothing is easier than to work through him by efficacious prayer; and since he is present also in our neighbours, there where he has his habitation, our prayers will find an echo.

In the divine character of this fraternity, as realized by our Lord, appears the striking originality and incomparable novelty of the law of charity. St. John said truly: *Mandatum novum*—a new law.

The manner in which the pagans were treated up to the time of our Lord is well known: slavery was the disgrace of the heathen world; centuries of the faith were required to overthrow it, and wherever Christianity wavered, slavery reappeared. The unwanted child was thrown into the sea; sometimes, if a heathen god speaking through the mouth of a false priest demanded it, even a strong, healthy child would be sacrificed and burnt. Gradually all through the ages man has given up regarding his neighbour as a descendant of the brute creation, and has begun to think of him as a fellow human being. But no one ever suggested that our neighbour was other than a man. It was necessary for Jesus Christ to say to the world: "Look upon your neighbour as another self, and this not in a figurative sense that has no foundation in reality, but because it is the truth. Your neighbour is me: in each of your brethren it is I, Jesus who is living, and it is for you to discover me there by faith."

The idea of the relations between man and his fellow has developed in this manner:

(1) There is man considered as a brute.

(2) Man treated as fellow man.

(3) Man regarded as another Christ: "as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."

Some of the mysteries of the Christian religion are most baffling to the human understanding, but

there is not one which is more striking than this "Christification" by our Lord of each of our brothers.

Henceforward the world is to be built up on a new plan. Read the letter of St. Paul to Philemon and see what he says to the slave Onesimus. "Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, ... to Philemon our beloved and fellow labourer.... I beseech thee for my son, whom I have begotten in my bands, Onesimus ... whom I have sent back to thee. And do thou receive him as my own bowels For perhaps he therefore departed for a season from thee that thou mightest receive him again for ever: not now as a servant, but instead of a servant, a most dear brother, especially to me.... Yea, brother. May I enjoy thee in the Lord. Refresh my bowels in the Lord." Let us remember that this poor slave who, in the eyes of the Roman law and the philosophers, was regarded as an outcast, was addressed by St. Paul as his own heart: a slave? No, he is far higher than a slave, he is a well-beloved son. St. Paul asks that he shall be received as he himself would be received, and the thought that this will come to pass rejoices his heart.

The author of *Quo Vadis* has thrown into strong relief the unexpected nature of this "new commandment" in these words: "I do not know how the Christians manage to live," said Petronius, "but I do know that wherever their teachings are followed the differences be-

tween rich and poor, master and slave, disappear ... there is Christ alone, a merciful loving-kindness unknown to us, a goodness contrary to all the instincts of mankind and of the Roman nation." It was this fraternal charity, in point of fact, which was so repugnant to pagan pride. "Me a Christian? Never! I should have to love the Bithynian porters of my litter, my Egyptian

bath-attendants, and my neighbour from Suburra. No, I certainly couldn't do this; these odious creatures deserve scorn, not love."

"As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."

In truth, this is a new commandment, so novel that even after centuries of use there are perhaps some who have not yet discovered it.

THE LITTLE CHURCH THAT A HOME IS

(Continued from page 11)

Lord. Amen."

For the apartment-dweller, or the humble renter of a single room second floor back, there is this consoling benediction which may, in the absence of the priest, be used by the lay person: "Bless, O Lord, Almighty God, this room (or apartment) that it be the shelter of health, chastity, self-conquest, humility, goodness, mildness, obedience to the commandments, and thanksgiving to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. May blessing remain for all time on this place and them that live here. Amen." After all these blessings the place is usually sprinkled with holy water.

There may be some who feel

that all has been done that is needful to make a home blessed and holy if the priest blessed the house, or if the ceremony of enthronement to the Sacred Heart takes place; but the family must remember that there is no magic in the rite of a house blessing or an act of consecration. A simple blessing cannot transform a worldly house or apartment into a little church where God dwells. It is nothing if a parlor or kitchen are sprinkled with holy water, and votive lights glow before the image of Our Lord. ... It is nothing at all unless the ones who live and work and play in these places sing God's praises by a Christian life.

PENTECOST

SOMEONE has said, possibly Léon Bloy, that we moderns are the true ancients. We, and not the long line of Old Testament patriarchs, kings, prophets; we, and other souls culled from classes low and high. Summation and fruition is in our day. To have the influx of all past centuries stored within us, to profit by all their forgotten hopes and half-realized ambitions, their passing conquests, this is our happy lot. Into us has it all flowed. What baffled these past peoples has become so clear to us. Truly, our God has a knack for "writing straight with crooked lines."

Some such thoughts as these must have passed through St. Paul's mind when he dared to sketch the logic of God's plan for "re-establishing all things in Christ." In a few lines to the Ephesians, he traces the broad outline of the project, how the Father singled us out to bestow His Paternity on us, "adopted through Jesus Christ as His sons." Then the Father, through this same Jesus, brought His scheme out of eternity into time "through His (Christ's) blood." Finally, on Pentecost, the last phase was entrusted to the Holy Spirit, Who was to make operative, to bring man into contact with this "redemption of posses-

sion." And the Holy Spirit went about His part of the task in no uncertain fashion on this Fiftieth Day after the Resurrection, the day the Church Fathers loved to call

Red Easter

The day of the great Harvest Feast in the crowded city of Jerusalem was the day the Holy Spirit chose. It was at the busy hour of nine in the morning. He began by filling the house in which the Apostles were hiding with "a sound from heaven, as of a violent wind coming." (Acts 2, 2) This tremendous ruse on His part brought all of Jerusalem flocking about the hitherto unnoticed little house. This way He assured Himself of an audience to which to announce the beginning of new things.

On the other hand, the mighty wind which heralded His coming



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by Hilary Ottensmeyer, O.S.B.

Power From on High

had a deeper, richer meaning. The very name He bears, the Spirit, suggests a more subtle purpose for choosing such a symbol. The word *spirit*, if we consider its Latin origin, evokes ideas like "breath, exhalation, wind." The Holy Spirit Himself is so called because He is the Breath of Love within the Holy Trinity. So by the sound of the wind at Pentecost, there is symbolized the great breathing of new life into those one hundred twenty some souls who were hiding in the upper room of this house in Jerusalem. Into Adam, God had breathed a living soul; into these one hundred twenty persons, the Holy Spirit breathed a soul living in a new, more intimate and intense way. Never before had man been so engulfed by God.

Moreover, when the Spirit Whom Jesus had promised seized upon this house, He set His sign of possession upon the head of each person in the Cenacle. Fiery tongues rested over each one kneeling there. *Fiery* because His possession of a soul is one shot through with the heat of Divine Love; *tongues* because the one so signed has now a vocation to fulfill: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be witnesses for me

in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth." (Acts 1, 8)

Tempting as it is to pounce upon these sensational angles of the Holy Spirit's coming, of themselves they meant little. The mighty wind grew quiet again; the fiery brightness of the tongues faded away. But the greatest prodigy of the day went on: this newness of life bestowed on the disciples. This is the pivotal point of the great day: these men, these women transformed, intoxicated by the new life suffused into their souls. We say of the Gospels that they are the record of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity taking flesh; the fascinating tale of the God Incarnate. Of the *Acts of the Apostles*, which tell the Pentecost story, we say just as boldly that they are the account of the Holy Spirit taking the Church unto Himself; the Spirit becoming "incarnate" in the Church. That which the Infant was in the cave at Bethlehem, this infant Church in the Cenacle likewise was: God among us—but in a new manner! The Holy Spirit comes under these signs, these wonders, miracles, ecstasies, all the lavish outbursts of holiness which followed this new union of man with God. And so long as this

outpouring of grace continues (which will be forever), in both the outstanding and common signs of it, this new Emmanuel, this new Advocate, is among us. This is the all-important meaning of Pentecost.

A new harmony

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit fill out the account of the events of that day. True, these seven supernatural powers were not given for the first time here on Pentecost Day; they spring out of the possession of sanctifying grace. But at His coming, the Holy Spirit stimulated the movements of these seven capacities, rendering them more responsive to His contact. Of this, Abbot Vonier says:

"Pentecost is not directly the mystery of the seven gifts. Pentecost was a new and supremely efficient playing of the Spirit on the seven gifts that were already in the souls of the disciples. In the pentecostal coming, the Holy Ghost produced, through the well-prepared instruments, through the vessels of election, effects of divine harmony such as had never before been heard in the supernatural world here on earth."

This may be futile, because too brief, but here is how St. Thomas sorts out the Gifts according as they influence the soul. Four of the Gifts play upon the acts of the mind. *Understanding* gives the mind a keen insight into the objects of faith. *Knowledge* sharpens the mind to enable it to separate error

from the truth, and from the gift of *Counsel* comes help to choose wisely among the everyday problems of life. *Wisdom*, the highest gift, allows the mind to move naturally, with ease, among the great things of the supernatural world; it is the gift of the contemplative. The other three, *Piety*, *Fear of God*, and *Fortitude* bolster up the acts of the will, and lead the soul into attitudes of filial love, reverence, and high courage. The emphasis of one gift above the others serves to bring out the unending fulness and richness of Catholic sanctity.

These gifts, then, differ widely from the great trinity of the Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope, and Charity, or their handmaids the Moral Virtues: Prudence, Temperance, Justice, and Fortitude. The main point of difference lies in this, that through these new, more delicate qualities the Holy Spirit can move the soul *directly* and *easily*. One modern author commenting on this text, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," (II Cor. 3, 17) remarks:

"The immediate presence of the Holy Spirit moving the will makes us slide into action not with labor and difficulty, but with a breath-taking ease and suavity and joy which betokens at least a momentary liberation from the 'law' of self-love in our members which so frequently and so disastrously conflicts with the law of God." (Thomas Merton)

Here then is the source of a new

liberty and a real freedom. From these seven fountains of the soul springs the martyr's spirit, the hidden power of virginity, the sublime courage of the confessors. The subtle play of the Spirit on His seven-fold instrument awakens the Christian to acts of highest virtue; their interplay is worked to a fierce flame in every life of great sanctity. Faithful response to their impulse leads even to the sparsely settled lands of the great mystics.

But more important to us all, the working out into everyday life of these seven gifts we know as the beatitudes. So turn to the Sermon on the Mount, run your finger down the list of the beatitudes, and determine how "spiritual" you are! (Really, it's not as simple as this.)

"We speak of these gifts as being non-ethical, or rather supra-ethical,

because they create, in the Church and in individual souls, attitudes that cannot be classified under any ethical system. We consider therefore that the eight beatitudes of the Gospel are the practical expression in the Church of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, because in the eight beatitudes a behaviour is described for Christians that has no foundation in ordinary morality." (Abbot Vonier)



Pentecost looks outward. It is the feast of great impulse, the launching of the apostolate, the day on which the Church Militant gets its marching orders. The remainder of the Church year will be nothing more than the leavening of humanity with the new powers driven into it on Pentecost Day.

Say it with a Picture

Janet Kennedy, former Anglican nun, now a convert to Catholicism, who painted the beautiful picture of Our Lady of Fatima that The Grail is selling exclusively, has painted 14 greeting cards for every occasion (Birthday, Feast Day, Get Well, Sympathy, First Mass, and other occasions). Instead of having to go to a religious goods store every time you want to send a card to someone, you can have a box of these cards and envelopes right at home. Also, a box saves you money. Purchased separately they cost fifteen cents each or \$2.10—bought in a box at one time they cost only \$1.00. Order your box of *Cards For Every Occasion* today from The Grail Office, St. Meinrad, Indiana.

The Strength of the Home Front



**The Forces of Destiny are focused
in our Catholic Hearths**

by Liam Brophy

AN ANGEL'S-EYE view of earth just now must be somewhat like our view of the heavens on a starry night, for in the deep, broad darkness of the world's bitterness Catholic homes must shine out as points of glowing light. The legions of Lucifer, taking advantage of the unleashed perversions, allied to scientific techniques, of the Soviets, have harnessed the monstrous hatreds in the hearts of evil men, and threaten to blanket the whole world in a real Dark Age. The Catholic homes of the world, as living centers of love, resist this deluge of dark hate that floods the earth, until the fury shall have spent itself. Our stumbling, devil-goaded genera-

tion has need of such reassuring light as Catholic homes afford.

Of old the Greeks carried the living embers from their hearths to newly-conquered lands as a symbol and a sign of the spread of their culture. From our Catholic hearths a light must be carried into the unknown future to guard it for God. Communists believe that posterity belongs to them since they have broken up the homes and banished Christ from the classrooms. The future generation now being reared in innumerable Catholic homes must gather all the strength of love, that from holy hearths the light of love may radiate into the far future. Destiny is even now being decided in the homesteads where God is treated as a familiar Guest.

Character is a rare plant of slow growth and needs the genial warmth of a home for its development from childhood to manhood. And our Christian way of life will be protected and sustained by men of character, a fact condensed in the phrase "Character is Destiny."

Liam Brophy has lived in seven countries by turns; his writings appear in American, Canadian, and European publications. He was engaged by the Social Welfare Department of Dublin in connection with the Congress of Family Unions held in Rome.

And a home matures slowly under the wise control of the wife and mother. It is her love that passes into every fibre of it, that binds it together in a tender wholeness, and fills it with an atmosphere of repose holy as a summer sense of silence. Cecilia's house in Rome, during the early days of the Church, was a haven for persecuted Christians, a refuge from the coarseness of the pagan world.

One can sense the pervading cheerfulness and peace of the home into whose very timbers a woman's tenderness has passed as music passes into the wood of a violin and makes it more mellow. There is nothing harsh or hurried in such a home, nothing to wound hearts that have been induced to lay themselves bare for comfort's sake. There is, for all its household cares, a large leisure about it in which minds can be perfectly at ease with each other, in which the masks with which we face the world may be put aside, and men may freely acknowledge each other within the charmed circle of a happy family.

Men have put their souls into many artistic creations, into sonnets and symphonies and sunsets, but they cannot create a home. They can make a house, it is true, of the most modern and efficient type, or planned as spaciiously as a medieval castle. But the build-

ing of the home, like the building of the body of a child, is a woman's tender and tremendous task. They sin against nature and against sense who ignore that high vocation and leave to the school the all-important work of character formation. One of the most eminent scientists of our time declared "Modern society has committed a serious mistake by entirely substituting the school for familial training. The mothers abandon their children to the kindergarten in order to attend to their careers, their social ambitions, their sexual pleasures, their literary or artistic fancies, or simply to play bridge or go to the cinema and waste their time in busy idleness. They are thus responsible for the disappearance of the familial group, where the child was kept in contact with adults and learned a great deal from them. . . . The child entirely moulds his physiological, affective and mental activities upon those of his surroundings. In order to reach his full strength the individual requires the relative isolation and the attention of the restricted social group consisting of the family."

Character is a creation and not a manufacture. It grows to fruition and flower in the atmosphere of the happy home, as saturated in love as the summer air in light.

It is only men and women of character, of moral courage, prepared to resist unto blood, who can hope to remain loyal to Christ in the midst of a paganized world without compromising with the forces of materialism that are invading the most sacred and guarded places. And character, as we have insisted, is created in holy and happy homes. Such homes, therefore, are our civilization's deepest line of defense.

France, for example, has been made frantically aware of this. Two terrible wars have almost swept away all her past greatness and buried the traditions of her Catholic culture under the arrogant rule of a ruthless pagan cult of military power. When Léon Blum wrote a book in a Nazi prison in which he tried to account for the root causes of his country's decline, morally and intellectually, he came to the conclusion that it was due, among other things, "to the loosening of family ties and open contempt for the dignity of home life." Behind the weakness of the Maginot line lay the weakness of home front defenses. There was a tragic dearth of heroes to defend her because there had been a tragic lack of homes fit for heroes.

But France, at least the more saintly and saner minds of France,

had long been aware of the decline of home life, and means were sought as far back as 1896 to protect and promote family life. In the year 1896 the National Alliance for the Growth of the French Population was formed. The next practical step was taken by the Abbé Viollet, who organized the first familial association in Paris in 1902, and who succeeded in having a Government Commission set up to find out the causes of the declining birth rate. In 1908 a popular league was formed of fathers and mothers with large families ("Ligue Populaire des Pères et Mères des Familles Nombreuses"). These associations achieved little success till the ravages of war made it apparent where the weakness of France lay, and in the acrid atmosphere of the second World War statesmen began to take practical measures for safeguarding the homes of France. In 1940 Paul Reynaud was elected first Minister of the Family and a Code of the Family was drawn up. Two years later a law was passed which, for the first time, gave the family legal recognition as a separate moral entity. In 1945 an ordinance was made confirming all official sanctions and encouraging familial groups to unite in the National Union of Familial Associations.

At a special Congress held at Rome last September the evidences of experts on Social Security from every part of the world were examined in order to find helpful solutions for the difficulties of families in the financial insecurity of the modern world. The Pope expressed his delight at the Familial Union's efforts to defend the dignity, rights, and duties of the family, to keep the family unit independent of the State, and to preserve unsoiled by cynicism its triple love—conjugal, parental, and filial. His Holiness gave enthusiastic approval to the family relief measures achieved and proposed by the Union, such as the

various forms of Maternity Benefit, Educational Funds and Dowries, and especially the resolve "to strengthen the bonds of unity between all the families of the world."

In the Catholic homes of the world lies an immense potentiality of all those healing virtues of which our moribund Christian civilization stands in direst need. *Focus* literally means *hearth*, and from every Catholic hearth may radiate the imperceptible rays of love and light, of goodness and all graciousness, until the whole world is linked up in a vast network of human affections.



A dog-loving landlord from Taybees
Had little use for young babies
He closed up his houses
To child-bearing spouses
—he recently died of the rabies.



A typical group of Holy Year pilgrims in procession

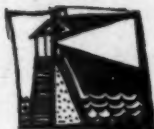
THE Holy Year is approaching the halfway mark, and already far more pilgrims have passed through the Holy Doors than in any one previous Year of Jubilee. Hundreds of thousands strong, the devout of practically every nation have thronged the horizons stretching out before the vigilant eyes of "the watcher on Vatican Hill."

The highways of Europe, which for so many decades have run red with the blood of brother fighting brother and have echoed to the impact of clashing armament, now witness the seeming spectacle of a united Europe, marching arm in arm toward a new goal—"the City of God." The sea-lanes and airways

from the West present the same phenomenon.

The Holy Father's confidence from the first that *many* would avail themselves of the spiritual advantages of the Holy Year was certainly a modest understatement. How explain the astonishing fact? A partial explanation is seen in the convenience and multiplicity of modern transportation. Yet we read of pilgrims walking many, many miles, refusing "lifts" along the way; one such group has vowed to go "on foot" from England. The genuine answer is realized in the spirit of the pilgrims; their attitude and conduct in the main breathes the spirit of prayer and penance. Sen-

HOLY YEAR COMMUNIQUE



by William Walker, O.S.B.

Reverend William Walker, O.S.B., of St. Meinrad's Abbey, and a native of Indiana, is at present Spiritual Director of the students at the International Benedictine College of St. Anselm in Rome.

sationalism has no quarter. The simple desire for spiritual renewal through peace and pardon grips the hearts of Christians, especially here in Europe where the war has hit hardest. Nationalistic, racial barriers can not keep down the universal aspirations of the soul.

The Holy Father has hoped that the journey to Rome of so many from all nations will bring about a conversion which will make itself felt, not only in the individual soul, but in the public life of nations—a conversion from the passing show of this earth to eternal values.

In the human body the blood stream must return to the heart to be purified and renewed. The Church also has a heart—the physical center, as it were, of the Mystical Body—Rome. Vital union

with this heart is essential for the life of every Christian. Although its influence is normally felt to the ends of the earth, still to approach this center in person may well be called a special sacrament. The privilege especially of seeing the Vicar of Christ in person has been called "the eighth sacrament." One has the impression at Rome that the very soil is sacred, watered as it has been by the blood of such great and innumerable martyrs. The catacombs, the shrines, the ancient churches are so many links binding the modern Christian to the generations that have preceded him in the Faith.

Indeed, Rome is not a fossilized remnant of former ages, but the vital confluence of the best forces of all ages. Pilgrims to the Papal City will find her quite alive. At her fires they will be able to enkindle anew their own faith, hope, and charity. These returning pilgrims will be for their homelands, as Pius XII has expressed it, "a certain new force and impulse reaching out and pervading the whole fabric of human society and thus bringing about a better and happier ordering of all things."

A HYMN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

"Fons vivus, Ignis, caritas et spiritualis unctio."

COME, O Comforter!

as you came

in that still whirlwind from the sky

to plant and nourish the Divine Will

in the garden of Mary;

come, rain within our dry souls your wine,

transform the empty stone of self

into a living nest, where you, its Dove,

may forever rest.

COME, O Flame of Fire

from your altar Zion!

descend in your exsufflation and inflame

our hearts; bind us through

fiery Wisdom to your seven-fold Mind.

Come, consume our selves, make us One

in your ladder of love

to the flowering sun.

O BREATH,

purify, sanctify;

anoint our seeing,

fructify our being,

deliver us from eternal death.

Come, take us to the land of Canaan

where in the milk and honey of breathing grace

your tongue may speak within us the Word—

our human Face.

O TRUTH,

in your gentle light the soul's eye

recovers sight and now can see

its nothingness.

In the flaming water, unction of infinite depth,

we breath his Breath and are born; then,

within those quiet Wings we flee,

for there all souls sing in Incandescent joy,

lost in the love of the Trinity.



Old Wine in New Bottle

Millie

by Q. M. Philip

SHE WAS not noticed by the others who waited for the troop train. If any did give her a thought, they lost it in their eagerness to see again a son, a brother, a sweetheart, or a husband. Few on the station platform would have guessed she had come there because of a deep longing to see the home town heroes. Not even her friend who had come to make Pullman reservations understood her apparent eagerness to mix with the crowd in the dusty, dirty station.

She stood a little apart from the crowd, near the telegrapher's window, her hands on a frayed book she held with a kind of firm ten-

derness. She remained where she was, even when, at the first sound of the approaching train, the crowd strained forward, tense and expectant.

Once before that train had carried returning troops, and once before she had waited even as she waited now. But Tom wasn't on that train, then. And only later did she learn that Tom wasn't to be on any train anywhere, ever.

She smiled, though a mist formed before her eyes. "When you come to meet me," he had said in a letter, "stand apart from the crowd, so I can the sooner find you. It's been an eternity, darling. God knows I love you more than ever,

and when this bloody war is over —" She could almost hear the words, the way he wrote them.

"Twenty-four years ago," she said to herself. And then the train steamed noisily up, and she watched the crowd as it surged and rolled forward to the doors of the coaches.

There were scores of happy reunions and a few scenes of heartbreak. There was hugging and kissing and much slapping of backs. And there were gasps and incredulous stares as womenfolk saw some of their men minus a leg or arm or otherwise bearing the scars of war.

Throughout it all, she did not once move from where she stood. There wasn't anyone she knew on the train. But it was good to see the boys in uniform, the heroes of another war, the men who reminded her of Tom. It was good to go back briefly over the years and think sentimentally on what might have been.

When the crowd began to thin, as cars and taxicabs drove off with their precious cargoes of joy, she cast a last, lingering look at the train that in a moment was to depart and journey onward to another town and another waiting assemblage of home folk. And as she looked and was herself about to leave the platform, she noticed a nurse leading a blind marine

away from the last coach and to the waiting room inside the station. Touched deeply, she followed with her eyes their slow and careful progress, and was surprised not a little when the nurse left the young and unfortunate warrior alone on a bench and went off somewhere into town.

Perhaps it was pity. Or perhaps it was love for the unfortunate. Or perhaps it was only kindness and respect for the brave. She did not know. But she went into the waiting room and sat down beside the youth whose hands were motionless and whose vacant eyes stared out on an infinite void.

"Waiting for someone?" she asked, not knowing what else to say. The words seemed to form awkwardly on her lips.

"For my dad, if he ever gets here," said the marine. His voice was deep and rich. "I thought he would be at the station, but I guess he couldn't make it alone. Nurse went to town to inquire if he is still at his old address. You see, he's blind like me, and the county may have put him in an institution while I was away. I was his only support—"

"Oh!" She swallowed hard. "I do hope he had friends."

"He wasn't a very friendly man," said the marine. "His affliction made him impatient with everyone. I never before could un-

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derstand why. But I know why, now. I would give anything to see a face again."

"Perhaps God will compensate you in another way," she said gently. "At least you need not feel it is a curse. Shrapnel, was it?"

"No," he answered slowly. "An explosion aboard boat. I happened to be in the way of it. Never did see any fighting. Maybe that's why none of that cheering I heard was meant for me. Anyway, nobody came up to shake my hand or tell me what I heard said to the others. Guess I haven't any friends. But I'm glad you found me here. I hate being alone, now."

She laid a smooth and warm hand on his shoulder. "I'll stay with you until your nurse returns," she said. "I think we can find something to talk about. Perhaps you want to hear something about the old town? I don't know any gossip, but I can tell you what has happened in a general way—"

"I'd rather you would tell me about yourself." A faint smile curved the corners of the soldier's mouth. "I'll bet you're young, and a sympathetic sort, and you have a face as lovely as your voice. What is your name?"

She blushed, glanced up to see if her companion or the ticket agent were looking at them. There was almost no one else inside the station. "I have been called Millie,"

she said.

"Millicent!" he exclaimed, bringing his hands to rest on his knees. "I could almost have guessed that. You are lovely, aren't you? I mean, you're the kind of girl all of us fellows said we left behind. I know I lied like the devil about a girl I didn't have. It made swell talk, kept my spirits up. But some of the boys did have girls, I suppose; and maybe some of them were like you. It must be grand to come home to a girl, to have her hug you and carry on as if you're a bigger hero than any general. I could hear them; and believe it or not, it made me mad enough to feel jealous. Guess I missed out on a lot."

She fought back the tears that gathered in her eyes, and she hardly knew how to answer him. She let her hand slip down his arm and folded it over his hands now locked motionless on his knees. "Perhaps some day some girl—"

"I wouldn't have the courage to ask it." His head moved slightly in the negative. "It would be too much to ask. I'll reconcile myself, and I'll make a go out of what may still be left to life."

"I know you will," she said. She looked up. "Your nurse is coming back. She is leading a man by the arm—"

"Dad, no doubt," he said. "I

suppose you'll go now. I wish you wouldn't. You have such a lovely voice that I could listen to it forever. I feel as if I met you somewhere before, as if I've known you. You must be a beautiful creature. The gold of the sun in your hair, the bloom of roses in your cheeks, and just about everything else as the poets would say. God, I wish I could see you!"

"Aren't you afraid you might be disillusioned if you did see me?" The words were a struggle to say. "Not that I would wish to disillusion you. But you flatter me so."

"I'm sure I'm not flattering you any," he said, his quivering mouth twisting with a chuckle. "I have always maintained you could tell how beautiful a woman is by the way her voice sounds to you. I know you're beautiful. Would you, just to leave me with a happy memory, kiss me? I've not had a girl I left behind, and there wasn't anyone to make a fuss over me when I got off the train, and maybe I've no right to ask what's

reserved for heroes. But I did give everything that was just short of life itself, and I did come back to the only town I ever called home—and it really would be something to remember if one were kissed by a beautiful girl when everybody else had forgotten him."

She bit her lips, and with all her will power she held back her tears. The nurse and the marine's blind father were standing before her, and the nurse looked at her with wonder and with understanding that penetrated her soul. For a moment their eyes met, as they sealed the secret they knew must be sealed forever. And then, when the nurse nodded to her and smiled through tears of her own, she turned the marine's head ever so slightly, and kissed him.

"You've heaven on your lips," he said. "I'll never forget you, Millie. Never."

And that evening, when she returned to her convent, Sister Mary Millicent was gravely quiet and thoughtful.



The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.

—Mark Twain

FEATURE BOOK REVIEW

by Alaric Scotcher, O.S.B.



Joan of Arc

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHARIOT OF JOAN OF ARC. By Charles Péguy. Translated by Julian Green. Pantheon. 216 pp \$3.00.

This is one of those rare books calling for one bouquet after another, for author, translator, and publisher. The author or poet deserves much praise and much thanks. The translator has come through without marring the original language and meaning of the poet's inspiration. In fact, the translation, which never has been claimed to be a metrical rendering of the free rhythmic verse, is admirable. The publisher too should be given more than one bouquet, one certainly for the format of the book with its powder-blue back and natural ecru-colored cover and the simple blue fleur-de-lys which is as French as the book's contents. The choice of the translator, an American steeped in French literature, a recognized author writing equally well in French and in English, calls for another bouquet for Pantheon Books; and the first presentation of the complete work in English has been timed properly. There have been anthologies, *Saints and Men*, *Basic Verities*, and *God Speaks*, to accustom our minds to this Frenchman

who himself said shortly after the turn of the century, "I am writing for twenty years hence." With such careful preparation, a complete work, probably one of his most important, is given to us; and so the harmonious working of these three factors makes us the richer, especially in our Christian Catholic heritage.

In this poem we may miss the simple and wonderful reality of those monologues wherein "God speaks," but the soul of Péguy, at bottom thoroughly Catholic and French from its peasant roots, speaks through the girl, Jeannette of Orléans, not yet matured into the magnificent saint, Jeanne of Arc. She it was who dominated the inmost being of this man throughout his life. Born and brought up in the same country, he could interpret the stirrings of her Christian soul and overwhelming charity because the same faith never entirely deserted him. Like the seed dying to itself, during Péguy's years of seeking to Christianize the socialism of Jaurès and Marx, this same faith had germinated within him so that his efforts to mysticize the very words and jargon of an intellectual concern for the poor had led him

back at last to the Christian love of St. Francis and of St. Joan for all men as the sons of the same Father, the true socialism.

That powerful peasant background (his forebears had been vine-tenders for generations at La Beauce), plus a shrewdness poured into his character by other half-peasant townsfolk ancestors of Orléans, bred the sympathy which did run wild for some time in the socialism of the day. His intellect was sharpened by his schooling in Paris, but he did not realize his heart was still ahead of his mind. When it did catch up with his heart, he gave in at once. He was peasant enough to see it and shrewd enough to recognize that the Catholic tradition had always been working in him, so much so that he repudiated any idea of the usual "conversion," maintaining that he had always been approaching the faith for his whole life.

A first look at Péguy's poetry calls to mind the free rhythmic verse patterns of Walt Whitman, but the parallel runs hardly any further. Whitman loved man, yes! But Péguy loved man in God, and God as He revealed Himself in man. This verse reads more like prose, and the further one goes the more one is reminded of the grandeur of Scriptural writings, more especially the repetitive patterns of thought and form in the Psalms. This springs too from the peasant background. Those near the soil use fewer words and better in some ways

than those who find a more sensuous delight in the too conscious shading and lighting of unusual words. The peasant mind uses good, strong, healthy words over and over again, and so does Péguy in this long mystic poem.

The love of man as God's creature, a recognition of him as important to God and so important to his fellowman underlies the literature of an awakened France, come to see the clay feet of Reason, aware at last that she had been robbed of Christian faith. Léon Bloy, a contemporary of Péguy, avowedly set out to begin a new current of literature in France, one that would carry the glorious banner of Christian spirituality against that journalism which had prostituted France in the name of Reason. Péguy knew how deeply the cancer had eaten in, for, besides saying he was writing for the future, he also stated, "The Catholics don't trust me They will begin to trust me when I am dead." His feeling for poverty, as a dignity that all men should experience for an inner richness of feeling, was shared by Bloy too, and Joan is an exemplar of such fruitful poverty. The description in the poem of Our Lord as a carpenter, working along with St. Joseph, is a rich tapestry, no thought or word of which does not add its specific tone or feeling to the pattern and design.

Georges Bernanos, who belongs with these other two giants in recent French literature, had the same

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deep-lying Christian love for all men. "Fr. Donissan" in Bernanos' story *Under the Sun of Satan* was in his time as obsessed with a vocation to snatch souls from hell at the risk of his own salvation as was Péguy's young Jeannette who cried:

Oh, if in order to save from the eternal flame

The bodies of the dead who are damned and maddened by pain,
I must abandon my body to the eternal flame,

Lord, give my body to the eternal flame.

The conflict in both cases is so violent, one is never quite sure if the protagonist is wrestling with Satan or with a perversion of pride. But, clearly, none of these people can bear the loss of one soul.

The problem or leitmotif of the book may well be this problem of damnation. The haunting fear that pain or suffering may be lost or useless covers page after page in the book as Madame Gervaise, like a Greek chorus, conflicts with this girl, Joan. Before her onslaughts, Hauviette, a young girl like Joan, has pertly presented the views of those Christians who practice their religion with little concern. These two characters, the only other two in the long, play-like poem, are brought into contact with the nascent saint, already concerned over the horrible toll of war, both physical and mental. The girl's mind is being formed to enter the war with only one end in view, "to kill the war." Her solid Christianity, with roots so deep in the soil of France, and that more

particularly of Orléans, will not be shaken. She will destroy one mystery—that of hell and any possible loss of the suffering which unites us with Christ—with the greater mystery of love.

The battle in Jeannette's soul is the battle in Péguy's. Both were peasants, French, Catholic, ruled by intellect and feeling. Mere emotion and cleverness, exemplified perhaps by Mme. Gervaise and Hauviette, never lasted for either of them. For a real Frenchman, things must be explained in a logical manner. Then they are felt, embraced and retained with the peasant's tenacity.

Péguy's life showed it for he lived a most difficult life after his return (or final adherence as he might have said) to Catholic Christianity. His wife came from a family of non-believers, his three children had not been baptized. His financial ventures were distinctly not successful from a monetary point of view, but once having thrown in his lot with a Christianity truly to be lived, he never wavered, wringing the miracle of a cure for one of his children, desperately ill with typhoid, by placing him entirely in Our Lady's hands—and tramping on foot to the shrine of Our Lady of Chartres to thank her, praying her rosary for the whole three-days trip.

His beloved St. Joan was the true expression of Péguy's life. She never deserted him from his youth, but followed him even in his non-Christian socialist years. Her dog-

ged adherence in this book to the deep, common, human feelings for God, already being transformed into heroic and supernatural virtue, reveals Péguy's own spiritual odyssey. Each year since his death he has grown dearer to Frenchmen; and now with such an excellent translation in its entirety of one of his gigantic poems which he called "Mysteries," we too can begin to reap fruits from his inspiration which is a Catholicity carrying back beyond La Beauce and Orléans to that of the Apostles and the early Christians.



"Our minds are like crows. They pick up everything that glitters, no matter how uncomfortable our nests get with all that metal in them."

—Thomas Merton

➡ Prejudices are rarely overcome by argument; not being founded in reason they cannot be destroyed by logic.

—Tyron Edwards

"The newspapers do not make brains, neither do the movies. Whoever is unable to do without them, at least in relative fashion, will never be a person of any depth of mind or imagination."

—Cardinal Saliege

➡ Read every day something no one else is reading. Think every day something no one else is thinking. It is bad for the mind to be always a part of unanimity.

—Christopher Morley

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Books

Like Lesser Gods

Outlaws of Ravenhurst

The Catholic Voice

Fitting God Into the Picture

LIKE LESSER GODS. By Mari Tomasi. Bruce. 289 pp. \$3.00.

"Great" personalities add color and richness to the pattern of plain, everyday living. While such individuals may be "great" either in their talents, or in their ability to understand the small and the great, or in their power to achieve wonderful things, their very "greatness" is frequently a source of trial to those near and dear to them. The truly "great" are able to unite a tender, warmhearted love for the cherished ones of their heart with an equally unquestioning and all-absorbing devotion to their work, even a dangerous work, be it a craft, an art, or just ordinary, average toil. This double love, this double devotion does not divide the "great" soul, but it does tend to rend and tear the hearts of their loved ones, who are not willing, or who are unable, to share and be enriched thereby.

Like brilliant flashes of lightning against a black, stormy sky, this

theme zigzags through *Like Lesser Gods*. From time to time the reader encounters, and marvels at, the devoted love of Pietro, a granite stone-cutter, for his wife, Maria, and his equally entire dedication to his dangerous craft. Maria, enriched by Pietro's love, but torn asunder by his love for his lung-crippling craft—for stone dust has no respect, even for the lungs of artistic craftsmen—nearly wrecks their simple and happy union as she endeavors to separate Pietro from his threatening but well-loved work.

The observant reader follows the presentation, the unfolding, and the solution of this theme through the varied and unimportant experiences of the not-always so winsome Mr. Tiff, an old retired Italian schoolmaster, who lives in the home of Pietro and Maria. Mr. Tiff's literary function is to acquaint the reader with the joys and tears in the lives of granite stonecutters in Vermont around the second quarter of the

present century. We must observe, however, that because of a host of unimportant characters whose appearance is as sudden as their exit is rapid, and because of the detailed relation of Mr. Tiff's odd excursions and rambling experiences, the vivid portrayal of a granite-cutter's life is dimmed, and the enriching love and pressing problems of Pietro and Maria are obscured.

—Pius Fleming, O.S.B.

OUTLAWS OF RAVENHURST.

By Sister M. Imelda Wallace, S.L.
Catholic Authors Press, 1201 S.
Lindbergh Blvd., Kirkwood 22,
Mo. 233 pp. \$2.75.

Uncle Roger didn't know what he was letting himself in for when he came to America and identified young George Abell as Sir Charles Gordon, Lord Rock Raven, heir of Ravenhurst. But then, villains usually slip up somewhere, and George was to prove a mighty slick slipping place indeed. Anyway, back to Scotland went the boy under the "guardianship" of his uncle, back to assume his rightful position as Earl of Ravenhurst, left vacant by the death of his father (or *was* he dead?).

Seventeenth-century Scotland was thoroughly Protestant, and George was thoroughly Catholic. He didn't know that all Catholics had been outlawed, that to attend Mass was to risk the loss of one's head. He didn't know that he was intended to be only a puppet in the hands of his evil uncle. His mother, the beautiful Lady Margaret, tried to tell him—

and then disappeared! And one day George awoke in a room that was somehow different from the one that he had fallen asleep in, and was attended by a nurse who claimed to be the same as yesterday's, but was much younger. And finally, he met his uncle Stephen, outlawed priest, and, inspired by the man of God, determined to show Uncle Roger a thing or two about just who was the Earl of Ravenhurst and who was not.

Here is high adventure indeed, as rip-roaringly thrilling, as swash-bucklingly romantic as a Warner Brothers' version of "Robin Hood." It's refreshing to see again an adventure story overflowing with the frankly melodramatic situations so dear to the young in heart, zestfully unsophisticated in the telling, fascinating in the reading. Castle Ravenhurst, thank goodness, is full of secret passages, and all the passages have treacherous pits in them, whose bottoms are lined with up-turned spear points, and whose sides are slimy-slick with moss! The villain is as treacherous as they come, the hero as valiant and upright as you would desire. There is the faithful old nurse, and the bluster-tempered but staunch old soldier. There are dungeons, and the solitary prisoner painfully carving his way out with a diamond ring. There is, in fact, everything you would want in an adventure story written for the young (and it would be a mistake to let age in years be the deciding factor as to one's youth).

Sister Imelda writes: "I have many book-length stories that I tell to students." Let's hope that she gets around to putting a few more of them on paper.

—Theophane Gonnely, O.S.B.

THE CATHOLIC VOICE. Edited by Theodore J. Vittoria, S.S.P. Society of St. Paul, St. Paul Monastery, R.D. 1, Canfield, Ohio. 243 pp. \$2.00.

The Catholic Voice has a message for every Catholic in America today. It is the message of the Catholic Press which Pope Pius XI called "My Voice." The Pope of Catholic Action said to a group of Catholic journalists, "You are My Voice. I do not say that you make my voice heard. I say, you are My Voice." (p. 53)

In our America today, there rings out a shrill, strident, ominous battle cry, challenging, threatening, and blinding with a barrage of bombast and falsehood. That challenge is the debased coinage of ungodly and godless words disseminated by a materialistic and secularistic press.

The Catholic Voice answers that God-less challenge, hurling a gauntlet not at the secularistic press, but at those who sleep benignly with elbows resting on editorial desks in our American Catholic Press, and at John Catholic who dozes complacently in his easy chair over the half-truth and this-worldly news of the secular daily. The challenge of *The Catholic Voice* is aimed at every Catholic who reads the printed page.

Twenty-one priests and laymen, drawing their testimony from a fund of skill and experience, bear witness, in this readable compilation of articles reprinted from various sources, that the American Catholic Press has, as Father Riccardo Lombardi, S.J., has said, "the greatest constructive opportunity in journalistic history."

Perhaps we should let *The Catholic Voice* speak for itself. And what does it say? "Wake up, brother. Wake up. Grab yourself by the arm and shake—shake hard, 'now is the hour to arise from sleep.'"

Joseph A. Gelin and Joseph A. Breig open the alarm clock barrage with some very awakening questions and answers in the first pages of the book (pp. 17-18).

Why is there no Catholic daily newspaper in America? Why no Catholic Life, or Time, or Saturday Evening Post? Why no Catholic best-selling books... There is no Catholic daily because there aren't enough daily Catholics. There is no Catholic Life because there isn't enough Catholic life. There are no Catholic best-sellers because not enough Catholics are best-buyers... And even our weekly press isn't what it ought to be—because we aren't what we ought to be.

Neil MacNeil, assistant managing editor of the *New York Times*, praises the fine job our understaffed, underpaid, and underread diocesan weeklies are doing, but has this to say by way of criticism (p. 125):

As all these news weeklies are diocesan organs, they naturally

cover the activities of the bishop, the clergy and the diocesan institutions; and when they have done that there is usually little space left for the larger issues that are disturbing the Church, the nation, the world.

Catherine de Hueck Doherty (the Baroness), founder of Friendship House, asks the question, "Has the Catholic Press a 'Siege Mentality'?" (pp. 149-50)

The Catholic Press in America is being called, as never before, to straighten the ways of the Lord in the hearts of men... But is the Catholic Press of America at large aware of its role? Has it arisen from its long lethargic sleep? ... Still hiding behind the ramparts of a siege mentality, developed with the rise of Protestantism, it is content to remain in its warm and pleasing mediocrity. Content to keep on denouncing Negatively new sins and old, in a language that is almost foreign to the modern world.

Truly, he who has ears to hear, let him listen to the vibrant challenge of *The Catholic Voice*.

—Geoffrey Gaughan, O.S.B.

FITTING GOD INTO THE PICTURE. By Mary Lewis Coakley. Bruce. 223 pp. \$2.50.

Writers of books on spirituality are, in recent years, laying more and more stress on the fact that sanctity is attained only in the present moment, *right now*. Which is a good thing, because in too many minds there is only confusion with regard to the all-important advance in

holiness expected of every human being. The average Catholic layman, when he looks at the striving-for-sanctity question, looks away again pretty quickly. Frightened by the rather overwhelming mass of external observance connected with his Catholic faith, he is easily convinced that sanctity lies either entirely or at least primarily in these observances. This emphasis on externals then leads him to this attitude: "Such and such a saint did such and such heroic acts. These or similar acts are far beyond my powers. Therefore, I must be content if I manage to get to heaven, and better forget about trying to be a great saint."

The greatest argument against such an attitude is the life of the greatest of saints, Mary, the Mother of God. While she lived on earth, we know of no miracles that she performed. Nor are any particularly outstanding deeds ascribed to her. What then, *did* she do that made her the greatest of all saints? Easily answered: whatever she did, whether it was sweeping the house, or suffering with her Son on Calvary, she did *because it was the Will of God for her then and there*.

That, in fact, is all any of the saints ever did. In some cases, God willed that the saint should do heroic things; in some cases (the Little Flower is another example) He did not. But in all cases, the saint became a saint because of his willing co-operation with the Will of God here and now.

In other words, it makes no difference what we do; the all-important thing is, "Why do we do it?" Our lives are a constant round of little duties to be performed. To recognize these duties as the Will of God, and to do them because they are such, is to advance in sanctity. And the only time we can thus co-operate with God is right now. The past is past; we can't change it. The future may never come. So all that we have left is the present moment.

Mrs. Coakley has written this book to show the layman how simple it really is to become a saint. She has filled it with hundreds of examples from everyday life to show us how easy it would be to give God the co-operation He wants—and, incidentally, to remind us how often

we fail to do it. Since she drew most of these examples from her own life, the inevitable result was that the book should be aimed more at women than at men; but any man can read it, with a slight mental shift from scenes of the household to the office or factory.

All the channels of grace are explored. Beginning with the idea of how it is important to make full use of the present, Mrs. Coakley follows with the two great commandments of love, with prayer, the Mass, state in life, and so on.

While not an outstanding book, it is worth-while reading, especially for its earlier chapters, which emphasize the importance of the present moment.

—Theophane Gonnely, O.S.B.

Shorter Notices

100 YEARS.

The history of the Cathedral of the Holy Name, Chicago, and of the Archdiocese of Chicago. An authoritative book, with a very beautiful format. There are 336 pages, with many pictures, among which are new four-color pictures of Pope Pius XII, Cardinal Stritch, and Holy Name Cathedral. Copies are available by sending \$7.50 to Holy Name Cathedral, 730 North Wabash Avenue, Chicago 11, Illinois (special price to religious and libraries: \$5.00).

Paradoxes. By Henri de Lubac, S.J. Translated by Paule Simon and Sadie Kreilkamp. A booklet, published by Fides Publishers, 325 Lincoln Way West, South Bend 1, Ind. 56 pp. 50¢.

Henri de Lubac, theologian, is a stimulating thinker. Though "Paradoxes" first appeared about two years ago, it seems destined to bear permanent interest. In the pithy paragraphs of this brochure, de Lubac challenges clichés and current thinking patterns to candle them against the true message of the

Gospel and tradition. Though no clue to its plan or purpose is explicitly given in the booklet, it was probably stimulated by the trend of the apostolate in France. One might criticize the little book for a certain lack of unity and full development. Nevertheless, "Paradoxes" will be of definite interest for leaders and directors of the apostolate throughout the world.

Federal Aid To Education. By Robert C. Hartnett, S.J. A pamphlet, published by the America Press, 70 East 45th St., New York 17, N. Y. 48 pp. 25¢.

Whether one favors federal aid for all children of elementary and secondary school age or not, a clear and well-substantiated review of the facts of the case at issue is worthy of record. In this pamphlet, Father Hartnett has outlined in five brief chapters those pertinent facts and in addition has presented weighty arguments that uphold the rights of children attending nonpublic schools.

The educational bills before the present session of Congress will be understood more clearly if viewed in the light of recent bills, such as the Barden and Thomas bills and the subsidiary bills having to do with health services, school lunches, and transportation. The knotty issue of Church-State relations so frequently misrepresented in the press is here given a clear interpretation; furthermore, the problem of "Separation of Church and State," when

viewed in its historical setting as the framers of the Constitution really meant the term to be understood, carries with it the solution to the problem. To this enlightening exposition the author has added a valuable current bibliography on the topics discussed.

The Glories of Divine Grace, Parts IV and V. By Matthias Scheeben. Translated by Patrick Shaughnessy, O.S.B. Separate booklets, published by Grail Publications, St. Meinrad, Indiana. Parts IV and V, 25¢ each.

With the publication of Part IV ("Eternal Effects and Value of Grace") and of Part V ("The Acquisition, Exercise, Increase, and Preservation of Grace"), we have an admirable rounding-out of Scheeben's beautiful treatise on grace. These handy, pocket-sized editions present us with genuine theology in clear, appealing language. None of the loftiness of the doctrine of grace is omitted, and nothing is made obscure by meaningless words. Part IV and Part V of this series complement in a very satisfying way the first three booklets of the group which have previously appeared (Part I: "The Nature of Grace"; Part II: "Union with God"; Part III: "The Activity and Fruits of Grace in the Soul"). Little has hitherto been available in English of this basic tract on divine grace. These booklets fully deserve to be read and studied by clergy and laity alike.

Chinese Comeback

A STORY is told of an incident in China: a young Catholic student was among a crowd one day listening to a Protestant lady conduct an open air mission meeting on a street in Shanghai. . . . She was criticizing the Catholics . . . not satisfied with adoring God. They also adore the Virgin Mary. That is very unreasonable as you will see after my explanation. "You see," she said, "on their wedding day a Chinese bride and groom are carried in a gorgeous chair covered with flowered silk. When they step out of the chair the decorations are removed, and the chair is stored in the attic. So too with the Virgin Mary. She was no more than a splendid chair for the Heavenly Bridegroom, and after Christ's birth she lost her glory and magnificence. We Protestants, therefore, set Mary aside and do not wrongfully venerate her as Catholics do." This was too much for the Chinese Catholic student who courteously after the manner of the Chinese made this reply to the lady. "Honorable lady, you spoke most truly about the marriage custom of my people in regard to the marriage chair. But I cannot possibly believe that in America you consider it right to treat your mother like a bridal chair. We in China have a great veneration for our mother and would not dream of putting her aside like an old chair after she has given us life. Nor could we possibly think of God's Mother as a bridal chair to be stored away in the attic. We Chinese Catholics love and honor Mary for what she is in truth, God's Mother, our Mother, and Heaven's Queen."

Rt. Rev. Alcuin Deutsch of
St. John Abbey
Collegeville, Minn.



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**THE LOVE
OF CHRIST**
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